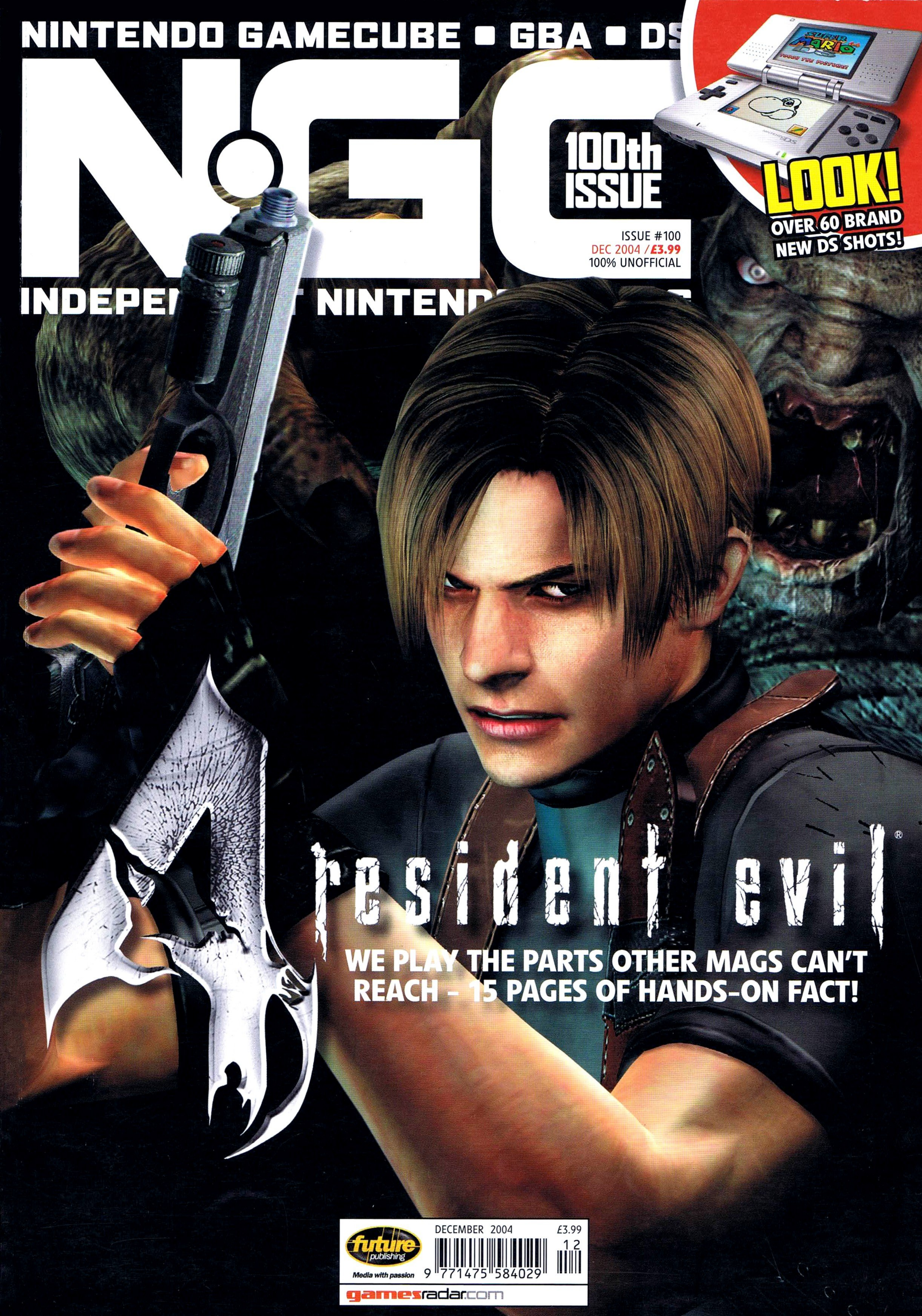


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100% GOOD

Reaching an agreement in the **NGC** office is a slow, heated experience, which usually ends in Paul storming out like the mixed up arty girl-boy he really is and stuff being thrown at Geraint. Trying to come to a collective decision about which papery memories from the **NGC** vault should be allowed to taste the sweet mix of fresh daylight and greasy fingers once more – now that was genuinely hard. Mainly because everyone's very possessive about their own personal collection of issues and flatly refused to let us spend too long flicking through them. Cries of "Don't break the spine" and "Who's got my issue 27? I want it back" still echo around our wood-panelled walls. And if ex-Editor Andrea Ball ever finds out Marcus still has ten issues with the words ANDREA'S COPY – HANDS OFF! shouting from the covers in thick black permanent marker, well, let's just say her Big Stick's likely to batter out some justice again.

If you've been with us since issue 1, we hope our drive down **NGC** memory lane – mind Grandad Overton™ there – brings a smile to your face. If this is your first issue, just look at what you've missed so far…

Team NGC
NGC@futurenet.co.uk



TURN TO PAGE 17
To get the freshest, most in-depth *Resi 4* info!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Go to page 112, where for a small amount of cash you can get three free issues and a free joypad. No excuses now!

TURN OVER THE PAGE!
To see the stunning new games we've managed to squeeze into this very NGC!

WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.



■ First there was the SNES, and Super Play came out alongside it – fanboys rejoiced.

■ A new machine meant a new magazine – but one with the same high standards.

■ Now we've got Gamecube, and you've got **NGC**. That's 12 years of Ninty love right there.



NGC'S
FIVE
STAR
GUIDE TO WHAT'S
UNMISSABLE
THIS ISSUE!
1
PAGE 17
UNDER PRES SURE
RESIDENT EVIL 4
INBRED OR DEAD!
Out of the village to the woods and hills – but not to safety.
PAPER MARIO
2
PAGE 48
PAPER MARIO
RPG SPECIAL!
Now the hilarious English translation's here, we Thousand Year a-Door it!
PAGE 17
resident evil 4
Follow Leon and witness the horrors beyond the village.
MEET ENJiKi
What scares Enjiki? She's not so bothered by zombies – being a woman of very little brain, she's nothing to fear – but the sight of Geraint in his Minish Cap gave her nightmares for weeks. He's since been told he's got to wear trousers. Yes, every day. And preferably clean, although he's allowed time to work on that…



PAGE 66

NFSU2

DEEPER UNDERGROUND! Bigger and deeper than ever – we bring you up to speed on the latest realistic racer.

PAGE 80

WE ARE 100

ISSUE 100! We've invited some old friends back (and Tim Weaver) and bring you 99 issues' worth of highlights…

PAGE 6

DS NEWS

CONFIRMED! DS is launching in the US with a wealth of software – we're first with the stunning new screens!

WHAT'S IN NGC?


Enough to keep you busy for weeks…

PREVIEWS

Amazing new games coming your way

NEWS

The latest rumours, truths and goings-on

EXTENDED PLAY

Getting more from your favourite games

REVIEWS

Ways to blow your hard-earned cash



NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

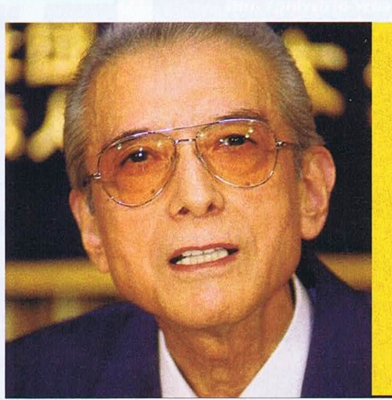
NEWSDESK





ALL SYSTEMS GO!

NINTENDO DS LAUNCH DETAILS FINALISED FOR US AND JAPAN...



IN OTHER NEWS...

DS GOES TO THE MOVIES

Former President of Nintendo Hiroshi Yamauchi has expressed his wish to see Nintendo enter the film industry – in the field of animation. It is being considered by Nintendo as a means of opening up new streams of revenue. Nintendo have a history of creating animation from their intellectual property. *Pokémon* has had a great deal of success and we've seen animated features based on Kirby, F-Zero and Zelda and Mario (although the latter two were stinkers). It's also worth noting that Nintendo have strong ties with Bandai – another company with a great deal of experience in this field.

More interestingly, Satoru Iwata explained Nintendo's plans to integrate DS functionality into cinemas, using the hardware's wireless feature to upload data to cinemagoers. In one example, people who go to see next summer's Pokémon release will be able to upload new Pokémon during the film.

THE FACTS

- Two backlit screens.
- Dual Processor Technology
- Touch screen for use with stylus or fingers.
- Built in microphone.
- Wireless networking for up to 16 players.
- Sleep mode detects any other DS owners within range.
- Multiplayer through a single game pak.
- Embedded *PictoChat* software for communication via text and pictures.
- GBA compatibility (but not for link-up)
- Six- to ten-hour battery life.
- 120 games currently in development.
- Seriously, it's gonna rock your face off.

READY FOR LAUNCH

Here's the current list of confirmed launch games for the United States and Japan. It still hasn't been confirmed if the hardware will be region free (we believe it will be), so if you're thinking of importing a DS it's worth holding off ordering one until we know for certain…

JAPAN	USA
Super Mario 64 DS	Super Mario 64 DS
Pokémon Dash	Pokémon Dash
Touch! Made in Wario	Touch! Made in Wario
Band Bros	Band Bros
Intuitive Stroke	Intuitive Stroke
The Urbz: Sims in the City	The Urbz: Sims in the City
Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper
Kimi no Tame Nara Shineru (XX/XY)	Kimi no Tame Nara Shineru (XX/XY)
Mah jong Tournament	Mah jong Tournament

At the time of writing there are 120 DS games in development – 20-25 should be released shortly after launch.





△ Can you wait for the European launch? Or are you importing?



When's it out? When's it out? Patience! DS is released on the 21st November in the United States followed by a 2nd December release in Japan, with a respectable-looking list of games ready for launch alongside the hardware in both territories. (You can check the exact details in the box at the top of this page.) If you're eager enough to import one, that's when you can expect to get your hands on Nintendo's innovative new platform.

Nintendo have a great deal to be happy about. A fine selection of unique hardware-exploiting titles at launch, a very attractive price point (¥15,000 for Japan and $149.99 in the US) and a sizeable selection of games waiting in the wings just weeks after the unit's release. Out of the box, DS will also come with *PictoChat* – Nintendo's wireless communication software – embedded in the system, letting you text and draw pictures to any other DS system within range. The US DS package also includes a demo of *Metroid Hunters*, whose single-pak wireless link will allow multiplayer deathmatches from the word go. Software is set to sell for a pleasantly low $29.99 – around £17. So confident are Nintendo in the new hardware and software line up that Reggie Fils-Aime re-asserted the company's prediction that they'll sell four million units worldwide as early as March.

You have to admit that although the launch-line up isn't mind-blowing, the list of games due shortly after the hardware's release (details over the next five pages) is certainly encouraging – and it's hard to believe that gamers won't find at least something there to tempt them into buying the system. Perhaps Nintendo's sales target isn't that unrealistic.

SHORT CUTS

THE FORGOTTEN FANTASY

Square-Enix have announced that, in addition to *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* they'll also be releasing *Final Fantasy III* for DS. One of the finest RPGs ever made, it's also the only *Final Fantasy* never to be translated and released in the west – which makes it quite a coup for DS. Obviously the game will be updated visually (the original was released on Famicom) and will be altered to accommodate two screens and the touch ability.

MAX DRIVE FOR GAMECUBE

Datel are releasing a 'MAX Drive' 64Mbit memory card for GC (that's about 16 times the size of Nintendo's Memory Card 59) for £19.99. The main draw for this is not just its size, but the fact that you can link it to your PC via a USB port. Not only can you back up your saves (a godsend for *PSO* players) but you can also trade your saves and data via the internet – which should make visiting friends' towns in *Animal Crossing* easier.

MORE POKÉMON ANYONE?

Eager to prove they've not yet run out of colours, gems and precious metals to exploit, Nintendo have announce yet another pair of Pokémon games – this time for DS.

Titled *Pokémon Diamond and Pearl* nothing is known about these mysterious new games other than the fact that they're well into development. Let's hope that Nintendo pull their finger out this time and give us a 'proper' 3D adventure on DS rather than just a slightly prettier top-down 2D affair, eh? There are also rumours of another Pokémon game starring Pikachu, called *Pikachu's Great Adventure*. Nintendo have yet to confirm this last one though…

MORE CHOICE…

Player's Choice, that is. *Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker, Soul Calibur 2, F-Zero GX* and *Mario Party 5* are all now available on Nintendo's budget range for a pocket-friendly £19.99.

WWE SURVIVOR SERIES

Due to a breakdown in communication, we inadvertently reviewed an unfinished version of *WWE Survivor* on GBA last issue. We'd like to offer our apologies to both THQ and our readers for the mistake and will rectify the matter by re-reviewing the game when the final build's ready (next issue)…



SUPER MARIO 64 DS

From: NINTENDO



e'll admit that after playing the E3 demo '*Mario 64x4*' we came away with some niggling doubts. Would the game actually feature the full N64 single-player adventure? Just how would the lack of analogue control affect play (remember that the original was *designed around* this feature in the first place) and would we just be faced with a bunch of multiplayer maps?

Well, to start with, yes, the single-player mode has been included. Although it's quite different this time around. To begin with there are four playable characters in the game – Wario, Mario, Luigi and Yoshi. Players, at points in the game, can change into any character to make use of their individual abilities. Yoshi, for example, can eat enemies and then squit them out in egg form at opponents.

If you're worried it's just going to be just a rehash of a seven-year-old game, you are a little justified in your fears, perhaps, but the good news is that the number of stars required for total completion is now 150 and with them comes a host of new levels and challenges to get stuck into – more than enough reason to get re-acquainted with the classic in our book. There are also going to be loads of sweet-looking minigames to play using the touch screen and an all-new control method, utilising a special thumb strap that allows the bottom screen to double up as an analogue controller. Add to this a four-player mode (including a single cart wireless link up) which sees you competing for stars and you're looking at one essential launch title. We can't wait for it.

△ Hel-lo! What's going on behind that portrait

POKÉMON DASH

From: NINTENDO
Nothing more than a minigame at present, and not a particularly good one either. Basically you have to race a Pika against another Pokémon by rubbing the stylus across the touch screen in the direction you want him to go. The faster you rub, the faster he runs. Hmmmm.





PUPPY TIMES

From: NINTENDO
The game formerly known as *Nintendogs*. So far we've seen a bunch of puppies running around a room – you can interact with them using the touch screen (look at diddums being tickled in the picture on the right). Looks like a dog-breeding Tamagotchi affair…





ANIMAL CROSSING

From: NINTENDO
"It had better have some kind of eject facility," says Mim. "I don't want some wireless intruder coming into my town, chopping down my trees and eating all my peaches." Maybe you'll be able to get a little guard-dog to watch over your place when your DS is in sleep mode.





TOUCH MADE IN WARIO

From: NINTENDO

A vegetable slicing minigame, spinning a plate with the stylus, picking a nose with a bit of tissue – it doesn't take a genius to know that touch screen/*Wario Ware* cross-breed is going to 'rock' the 'house'. However, unlike Geraint, we figured all this out without dribbling *actual spittle* from the corners our mouths. This'll be available at launch too.



FEEL THE MAGIC XY-XX

From: SEGA

Riding high on Marcus' most wanted. It's a collection-of-minigames game, which has you wooing a young lady by picking scorpions off her, washing her arms and finding her jewellery on a beach by pushing away sand with your stylus. However, it's the ability to blow into the mic to extinguish a candle that really floats his boat.



TENDO DOKUTA

From: SPIKE

Another of the high-concept touching games. In *Dokuta* you play the part of a doctor helping out patients by slicing open their bellies with a stylus before zooming in on infected organs and doing a spot of digital surgery. The top screen, pleasingly, shows your charge writhing in pain as you poke and prod them for an accurate diagnosis.









ADVANCE WARS

From: NINTENDO

What are they playing at here? Let's face it, the GBA version was hardly bursting at the seams with visual effects and, well, this doesn't look that much different. Let's be honest. It still makes Martin feel 'warm inside – like I've been climbing ropes in school, when I get to the top I feel like woooooo'. Whatever that means.



GANBARE! GOEMON

From: KONAMI

Directly translated as *GO! Goemon*. It's good to see the little fella back again, especially as in one demo we saw you could 'ping' the mystical Ninja up to higher platforms by twanging an elastic bridge on the touch screen (see pic, bottom-left). Expect plenty of platforming-adventure-style-coin-chucking action. Soon-ish.









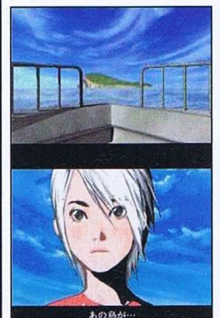
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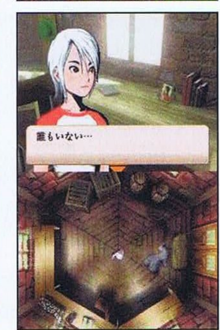
From: NINTENDO

This looks interesting. It's a detective game from Nintendo – a kind of graphic adventure that sees a girl acting on clues left by her dead father to save her mother being killed by a machine. This kind of game is very popular in Japan but less so in the west, so it may never get translated.



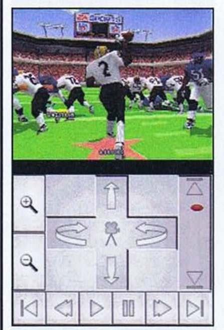
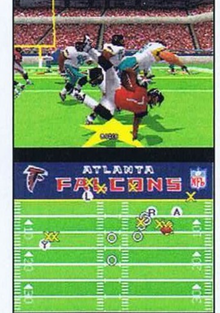






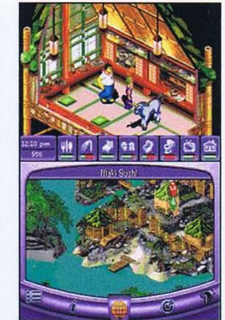
MADDEN

From: EA
It's not the 3D graphics or the ability to use the touch screen to create your plays that excites us (nor, in fact, the way you get to see the whole field in the touch screen). Instead, it's the ability to brandish your greasy hot-dog at cheerleaders from the touchline. This is, of course, a feature that's been entirely made up. By us. It's going to be great-looking American footie, as usual.

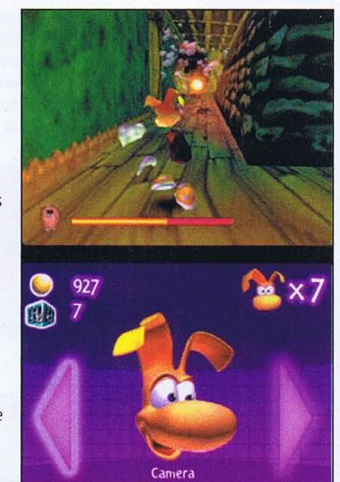
THE URBZ

From: EA
Two different versions of the urban rep-building sim (GBA and GC) too much to take? Well tough, you're getting another. This time, doll up your uber-hip style disaster using the touch screen and wander the city flashing your bling like the jobless dosser you are. Hopefully, if you show off enough you'll be able to get all kinds of social misfits to actually *like* you. Excited?

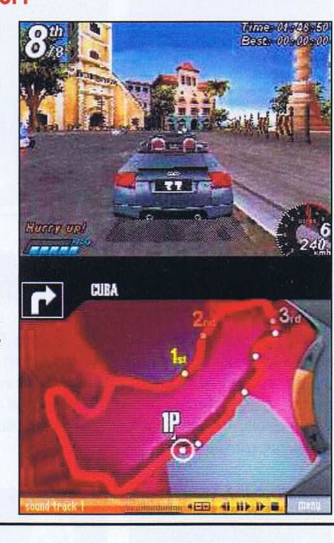
RAYMAN DS

From: UBI SOFT
It was inevitable he'd make a appearance – but now you can actually, physically rub the limbless git's gurning face. Or punch it – it's up to you. Just you wait, platforming 'heroes' Crash and Spyro will be visiting the DS release list next…



ASPHALT GT

From: UBI SOFT
It's not clear if, as in *Ridge Racer*, you can use the touch screen to control your car – this first screen simply shows a map (ho hum). We're sure Ubi Soft will try to be a bit creative with DS' creative options though – nice bit o' wireless *Asphalt?*



YAKUMAN DS

From: NINTENDO
Mah jong anyone? Piles and piles of digital tiles that need to be… er… does *anyone* have the faintest idea how to play this? No? Well it's got Nintendo characters in it so, um… well… er, chances are it won't make it out over here anyway. Which is a good thing – because it means we won't have to embarrass ourselves trying to make out we're Mah jong masters or owt…





MR DRILLER: DRILLER SPIRITS

From: NAMCO
Ah yes, this is more like it. Apparently you control all the action using the touch screen – something that makes your descent much faster as you tap the blocks that require removing. The twin screens also give you a better view of any hazards that may fall on your head. The new 'Pressure' mode (where you're chased by a big drill) looks like a worthy addition too.




ZOO KEEPER

From: BUDDIEZ
It's certainly colourful, we'll give it that, and the angular creatures remind us of a bit of *Animal Leader*. Apparently, herds of right-angled creatures have run away from a zoo and it's up to you to match three animal icons (using the touch screen) to recapture the escaped beasts. Just look at the fauna confusion in the right pic. It'll be released in Japan at the system's launch.





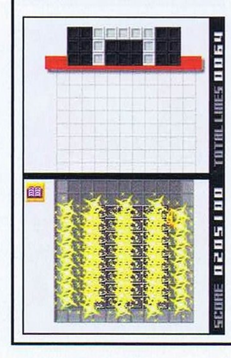
CRUSH

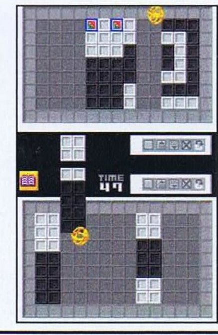
From: UBI SOFT
This a dating game that puts you in the shoes of either gender (whatever takes your fancy) and lets you go chasing a digital date around a ski resort. In order to win over the object of your affection you have to choose wisely from a selection of dialogue options – in the hope that you'll end up in a cheesy clinch like the one below. Paul has already pre-ordered two copies.




INTUITIVE STROKE

From: NINTENDO
Is this the super-addictive puzzler we talked about last issue? The one that's allegedly 'completely' addictive? Maybe it'll be the new *Tetris*?! Maybe it's a game involving flipping over tiles with the touch screen! Maybe we don't have a clue what we're on about! This is clearly one of those games you have to play before its appeal becomes apparent, so we'll reserve judgement for now.

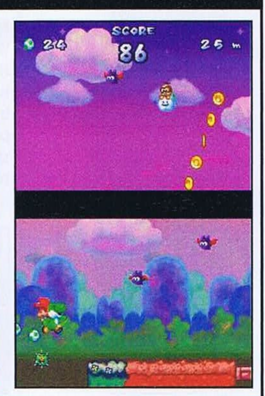






YOSHI'S TOUCH AND GO

From: NINTENDO
The early *Balloon Trip* demo becomes a full game. In this you use your stylus to guide Baby Mario and Yoshi to the end of a level by drawing clouds to circumvent obstacles. This was one of the best demos at E3 back in May, showing good use of the dual screen configuration.

PRINCE OF TENNIS 2005: CRYSTAL DRIVE

From: KONAMI
The only tennis game in existence whose subtitle sounds like a cul-de-sac. We're low on exact details regarding this one, but we suspect it may involve whacking a yellow felty ball over a 'net' using a graphite and carbon paddle woven taut with cat-gut.




PLAY TOGETHER! BAND BROTHERS

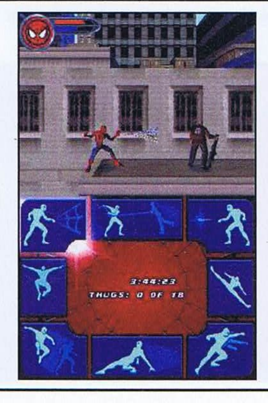
From: NINTENDO
A *Beat-Mania* style rhythm action game that lets you jam with your mates, with each DS taking control of a different instrument (played using the touch screen) over a selection of songs. We suspect that, with enough players, this could turn out to be very special.





SPIDER-MAN 2

From: ACTIVISION
This looks… interesting. Actually, no, it doesn't. Just one look at it and we've placed it way down our shopping list. Nice bit of 2D-cum-3D side-on action, anyone? We're considering nipping down to bookies to place a month's wages on this one being a bit uninspiring…




MARIO KART DS

From: NINTENDO

We really love Mario's take on the old Formula 1 car, and the sight of some old tracks from the SNES (see the bottom-left screenshot) and even the N64 version really brings a tear to the eye. We're still unimpressed with the poor use of the second screen, though. Maybe this should act as a rear view-mirror, letting you aim backward firing shells to better effect.





METROID PRIME HUNTERS

From: NINTENDO

The screens have been swapped round in terms of function, with the touch screen now having the map, while the top screen displays the action. The touch screen can be used to deliver a mouse-style method of aiming, while the D-pad takes care of moving and strafing. Best of all is the fact that it's super-smooth and races along at a fantastic pace.





METEOS

From: BANDAI

From Tetsuya Mizuguchi (*Rez*) and Masahiro Sukarai (*Kirby*) comes this odd little puzzler. You have to join together clumps of falling meteorite and then blast them back into space to save a planet from destruction. The puzzle bit is at the bottom and the 3D meteorites at the top. Odd game, but the pedigree behind it is certainly impressive.



PING PALS

From: THQ

This is basically *PictoChat* with bells and whistles, so THQ are going to have to do a hell of a lot to justify its existence – especially when *PictoChat* comes installed on the system itself. In *Pals* you can create your own avatar and accessorise it with 'cool' trinkets that you earn through using the software. Hardly amazing, and it all seems a bit, well, pointless right now...

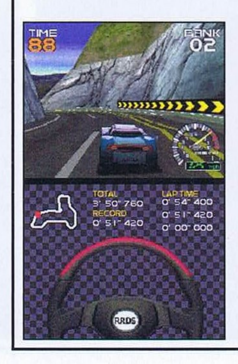


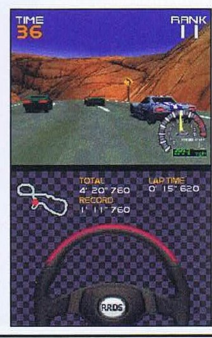


RIDGE RACER

From: NAMCO

Sure, it looks a bit like an early PSone game, but as long as the frame rate is nice and slick we don't really care. The most interesting aspect is the control method – using the touch screen to deliver sensitive analogue steering controls. Quite how this will work we don't know, until we get our hands on it, but unfortunately, early reports indicate it needs some serious work.





MOST WANTED
UK GAMES AWARDS 2004

THE CATEGORY WINNERS



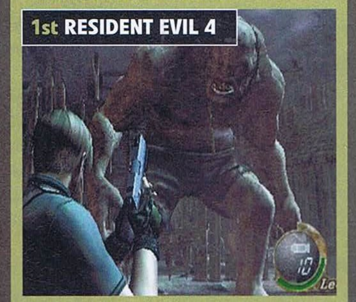
Is it that time already? Yes. It is. Time to reveal the UK's Most Wanted Gamecube game (among others). It's... well, it's just there. Just... there:

To be honest, it came as no great surprise – *Resident Evil 4's* a game we feel's so significant, so drop-what-you're-doing-and-take-a-look-at-this impressive that we've placed it on the cover of our landmark 100th issue. It also came in a close third on the all-format Most Wanted Action/Adventure game (in fact, there were three Gamecube games in the top five). So a thumbs up to everyone who voted.

The ultimate winner – picking up the award for Most Wanted Game of 2004 – will be revealed at the Golden Joystick Awards on 5th November. Our prediction? It'll be between *Resident Evil 4*, *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* and *Halo 2*. We'll give you the full report on the awards ceremony next issue...

GAMECUBE GAME

1st RESIDENT EVIL 4



2nd Zelda Four Swords Adventures
3rd Metroid Prime 2
4th TimeSplitters Future Perfect
5th Paper Mario 2

XBOX GAME

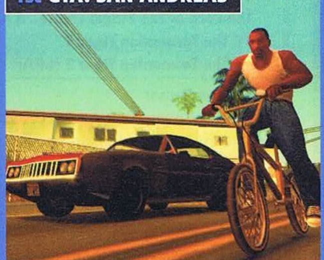
1st HALO 2



2nd Pro Evolution Soccer 4
3rd Doom 3
4th Fable
5th Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3

PS2 GAME

1st GTA: SAN ANDREAS



2nd Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
3rd Pro Evolution Soccer 4
4th Killzone
5th Gran Turismo 4

SPORTS GAME

1st PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4



2nd Championship Manager 5
3rd Football Manager 5
4th WWE SmackDown! Vs RAW
5th WWE WrestleMania XXI

DRIVING GAME

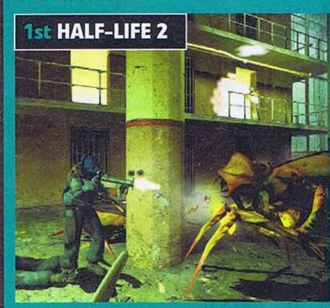
1st GRAN TURISMO 4



2nd Need for Speed Underground 2
3rd OutRun 2
4th Forza Motorsport
5th Richard Burns Rally

PC GAME

1st HALF-LIFE 2



2nd Doom 3
3rd LOTR: Battle for Middle Earth
4th Star Wars: KOTORII
5th Rome: Total War

FIND OUT THE MOST WANTED GAME OF 2004 BY VISITING GamesRadar.com or www.goldenjoystick.co.uk at 5pm on the 5th November

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

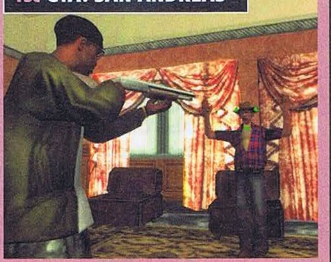
1st HALO 2



2nd Half-Life 2
3rd GoldenEye: Rogue Agent
4th KillZone
5th Doom 3

ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME

1st GTA: SAN ANDREAS



2nd Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
3rd Resident Evil 4
4th Prince of Persia Warrior Within
5th Zelda: Four Swords Adventures

STRATEGY/RPG GAME

1st THE SIMS 2



2nd LOTR: Battle for Middle Earth
3rd Warhammer 40K: Dawn of War
4th RollerCoaster Tycoon 3
5th Rome: Total War

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

OCTOBER

29	Duel Masters: Sempai Legends (GBA)	Atari
29	GBA SP Limited Pink Edition (Hardware)	Nintendo
29	Grand Theft Auto Advance (GBA)	Rockstar/Take 2
29	Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue (GBA)	Nintendo
29	Lego Knights' Kingdom (GBA)	THQ
29	NBA Live 2005	EA
29	Premier Manager 2004-05 (GBA)	ZOO
29	Tony Hawk's Underground 2 (GBA)	Activision
29	X-Men Legends	Activision

NOVEMBER

5	I-Ninja (GBA)	ZOO
5	The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age (GBA)	EA
5	TY The Tasmanian Tiger 2	EA
5	TY The Tasmanian Tiger 2 (GBA)	EA
12	Finding Nemo: The Continuing Adventures (GBA)	THQ
12	GBA SP Zelda Limited Edition Pak (Hardware)	Nintendo
12	It's Mr Pants (GBA)	Rare/THQ
12	The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap (GBA)	Nintendo
12	The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	EA
12	Paper Mario 2: The Thousand Year Door	Nintendo
12	The URBZ: Sims in the City	EA
12	The URBZ: Sims in the City (GBA)	EA
19	GBA SP Mario Limited Edition Pak (Hardware)	Nintendo
19	Ghost Recon 2	Ubi Soft
19	Mario vs Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
19	Mega Man X Command Mission	Capcom
19	Ms Pac-Man: Maze Madness (GBA)	ZOO
19	Need for Speed Underground 2	EA
19	Need for Speed Underground 2 (GBA)	EA
19	Payback (GBA)	ZOO
19	R-Type III (GBA)	ZOO
19	Tales of Symphonia	Namco/Nintendo
19	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2 (GBA)	Konami
19	Wings (GBA)	ZOO
19	Yu-Gi-Oh! Falsebound Kingdom	Konami
25	NEW ISSUE OF NGC ON SALE TODAY!	
26	Beyblade GRevolution (GBA)	Atari
26	Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision
26	Dead to Rights (GBA)	ZOO
26	Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	Activision
26	Lemony Snicket's A Series of… (GBA)	Activision
26	Metroid Prime 2: Echoes — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
26	Pac-Man World (GBA)	ZOO
26	Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Ubi Soft
26	Spyro: A Hero's Tail	Vivendi
26	Super Mario Ball (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Hot Wheels Stunt Track Challenge (GBA)	THQ
TBC	The Incredibles	THQ
TBC	The Incredibles (GBA)	THQ
TBC	King Arthur	Konami
TBC	Nicktoons Freeze Frame Frenzy (GBA)	THQ
TBC	The Polar Express	THQ
TBC	The Polar Express (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	THQ
TBC	Power Rangers: Dino Thunder (GBA)	THQ
TBC	WWE Survivor Series (GBA)	THQ

DECEMBER

3	GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA
3	Monopoly (GBA)	ZOO
3	Racing Gears Advance (GBA)	ZOO
10	Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories (GBA)	Nintendo

WINTER 2004

All Grown Up (GBA)	THQ
Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown	THQ
Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown (GBA)	THQ
Hardcore Pool (GBA)	Telegames
Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
Metal Slug Advance (GBA)	Ignition
Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King (GBA)	Buena Vista
Oggy and the Cockroaches (GBA)	Telegames
River King (GBA)	Natsume
Robocop	Avalon

TBC 2004

Alien Hominid	O~3
Lamborghini FX	Avalon
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco
Space Raiders	Taito
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Namco
Total Club Manager	EA
Tron 2.0: Killer App (GBA)	Buena Vista
World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco
Yu-Gi-Oh! Destiny Board Traveller (GBA)	Konami

JANUARY 2005

TBC	Banjo-Kazooie Pilot (GBA)	Rare/THQ
TBC	Shaman King: Master of Spirits (GBA)	Konami

FEBRUARY 2005

TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies (GBA)	THQ

MARCH 2005

11	Robots	Vivendi
11	Robots (GBA)	Vivendi
TBC	Killer 7 — MOST WANTED	Capcom
TBC	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	Konami
TBC	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom

SPRING 2005

Animal Crossing (DS)	Nintendo
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django (GBA)	Konami
Mario Kart DS (DS)	Nintendo
Metroid Prime: Hunters (DS) — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
NBA Street V3	EA
NEW Super Mario Bros (DS)	Nintendo
Nintendo DS (Hardware)	Nintendo
Nintendogs (DS)	Nintendo
Resident Evil 4 — MOST WANTED	Capcom
Smashing Drive (GBA)	ZOO
Super Mario 64x4 (DS)	Nintendo
WarioWare DS (DS)	Nintendo
Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Adventure	Ubi Soft
Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Adventure (GBA)	Ubi Soft

TBC 2005

Advance Wars: Under Fire	Nintendo
Asphalt GT (DS)	Ubi Soft
Atari Classics (DS)	Atari
Baten Kaitos	Namco
Boktai (working title) (DS)	Konami
Bomberman (DS)	Hudson
Castlevania (working title) (DS)	Konami
Codename: Kids Next Door (GBA)	Take 2
Custom Robo	Nintendo
DK: King of Swing (GBA)	Nintendo
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	Nintendo
Dora the Explorer: Super Star Adventures (GBA)	Take 2
Dragon Ball Z (DS)	Banpresto
Dragon Booster	Konami
Dragon Booster (DS)	Konami
Dragon Quest Monsters (working title) (DS)	Square Enix
Dynasty Warriors (DS)	Koei
Egg Monster Heroes (DS)	Square Enix
Fantastic Four	Activision
Feel the Magic: XY-XX (DS) — MOST WANTED	Sega
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles (DS)	Square Enix
Fire Emblem	Nintendo
Frogger 2005	Konami
Frogger 2005 (DS)	Konami
Funkydilla	Zoonami
Game Zero (working title)	Zoonami
Ganbare Goemon (DS)	Konami
Geist	Nintendo
The Godfather	EA
GoldenEye (DS)	EA
The Legend of Zelda — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures	Nintendo
Madden NFL (DS)	EA
Mario Party 6 — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Mario Tennis — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Mario Tennis (GBA)	Nintendo
Mega Man Battle Network (DS)	Capcom
Meteos (DS)	Bandai
Mr Driller (DS)	Namco
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed (DS)	Bandai
Monster Rancher (DS)	Tecmo
Moonlight Fables (DS)	Majesco
The Movies	Activision
Nanostray (DS)	Majesco
Need for Speed Underground (DS)	EA
Nintendo Puzzle Collection	Nintendo
Odama	Nintendo
One Piece (DS)	Bandai
Pac'n Roll (DS)	Namco
Pac-Pix (DS)	Namco
Rave Master: Special Attack Force (GBA)	Konami
Rayman (DS)	Ubi Soft
Robots (DS)	Vivendi
Scarface	Vivendi
Secret of Mana (DS)	Square Enix
Snowboard Kids DS (DS)	Atlus
Sonic DS (working title) (DS)	Sega
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie	THQ
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie (GBA)	THQ
SpongeBob SquarePants (DS)	THQ
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Star Fox — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Survival Kids (DS)	Konami
Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf (DS)	EA
Trainee Doctor Heaven (DS)	Spike
TimeSplitters Future Perfect	EA
Ultimate Brain Games (DS)	Telegames
Ultimate Card Games (DS)	Telegames
Ultimate Pocket Games (DS)	Telegames
Unity	Lionhead
The URBZ: Sims in the City (DS)	EA
Vandal Hearts (working title) (DS)	Konami
Viewtiful Joe (DS)	Capcom
WINX (working title) (DS)	Konami
World Soccer Winning Eleven Series (working title) (DS)	Konami
Yoshi's Universal Gravitation (GBA)	Nintendo
Yoshi's Touch and Go (DS) — MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour (DS)	Konami
Zoids (DS)	Tomy

US RELEASES

The most important US releases to import…





NOVEMBER

1	The Polar Express	THQ
2	Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	Activision Value
2	Elf: The Movie (GBA)	Crave
2	World Championship Poker (GBA)	Crave
8	Mario Tennis	Nintendo
15	Metal Slug Advance (GBA)	SNK
15	Metroid Prime 2: Echoes	Nintendo
16	Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings	Namco
16	Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision
15	Fear Factor: Unleashed (GBA)	Hip Games
16	King Arthur	Konami
16	Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics (GBA)	Atari
17	GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA
21	Nintendo DS (Hardware)	
23	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom

DECEMBER

6	Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
6	Mario Party 6	Nintendo

JANUARY 2005

4	Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town for Girls (GBA)	Natsume
10	NFL Street 2	EA
11	Resident Evil 4	Capcom
15	Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway

FEBRUARY 2005

28	Killer 7	Capcom

MARCH 2005

1	Geist	Nintendo

JUNE 2005

6	Advance Wars: Under Fire	Nintendo

JAP RELEASES

Big name Japanese future hits.





NOVEMBER

4	Zelda no Densetsu: Fushigi no Boushi (GBA)	Nintendo
11	Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories (GBA)	Square-Enix
14	Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children Messiah Riser (GBA)	Atlus
18	Giant Egg: Billy Hatcher no Daibouken (Reprint)	Sega
18	Kaijuu no Shima: Amazing Island (Reprint)	Sega
18	Mario Party 6	Nintendo
18	Sonic Adventure DX (Reprint)	Sega
25	Wizardry Empire 3	Starfish
16	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom
16	Wagamama * Fairy Milmo de Pon! (GBA)	Konami

DECEMBER

2	Mr Incredible	D3
2	Nintendo DS (Hardware)	
9	Get Ride! AMDrive Shutsugeki! Battle Party (GBA)	Konami

WINTER 2004

BioHazard 4	Capcom
Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
Super Robot Taisen GC	Banpresto
Yoshi no Banyuuin Ryoko (GBA)	Nintendo

TBC 2004

Bura Bura Donkey (GBA)	Nintendo
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	Nintendo
Yoot Saito's Odama	Nintendo

TBC 2005

Chaos Field	Sega
Killer 7	Capcom
The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes	Nintendo
Star Fox	Nintendo

N·GC MOST WANTED

The top ten games we're dreaming about right now (and in some cases, playing)…



1 ▲ RESIDENT EVIL 4 CAPCOM

Sorry, Link fans, but *Resi's* risen to the top again. Actually, we're not *that* sorry. *Resi 4's* a superbly crafted videogame – a double-barelled thrill-blast straight to your pleasure sac. And the new-look Zelda's not out until, what, next Autumn? Next <whisper it> *Christmas?* So, come on, let's join together in one Evil-Zelda club of hope. Gamecube's finest hour's yet to come…

IN A NUTSHELL: Forget the post-Christmas blues. *Resi's* coming…



2 ▼ THE LEGEND OF ZELDA NINTENDO

"I am not LInk," was the official word from Shigeru Miyamoto a mere five months ago. Off the record, though, we think he is. We've got images of Nintendo's glossy-maned star running around his house, naked apart from a Minish Cap, sword, shield and pointy boots claiming he "must have piece of heart" in our brains, and we don't want them there.

IN A NUTSHELL: 2005's going to be a vintage year – on the strength of two games.



3 ◀▶ MARIO TENNIS NINTENDO

While we couldn't give a mixed double for the realworld toff-fest of tennis, videogame tennis is a whole new ballgame (if you'll pardon the pun). Videgame tennis from the house of Nintendo, via developers Camelot, ram-jammed with characters we love and designed with flair, now that's something that'll have us lobbing with dirty joy.

IN A NUTSHELL: The sequel to *Mario Tennis* on N64. It really is that simple.



4 (NEW ENTRY!) FEEL THE MAGIC: XY-XX (DS) SEGA

Early indications of the-Dual-Screen-game-formerly-known-as *Project Rub* are good. Imagine the minigame idiocy of *Wario Ware*, but with a more adult theme and looks, and you're some way to describing the madness of *Feel the Magic*. Try to impress a girl by picking scorpions off her dress or digging through sand for her precious junk? Steady now…

IN A NUTSHELL: The best use of DS features so far. You even have to blow on the screen.



5 (NEW ENTRY!) MARIO KART DS NINTENDO

……………..! That's the sound of Geraint's brain processing brand-new images of Nintendo's premier racer – the twin-screen version. True, the touch screen seems to have limited use here (look – a map) but the wireless multiplayer will be where this *Kart* comes into its own. Playing *Mario Kart* against someone *you don't even know?* Crazy!

IN A NUTSHELL: The pinnacle of *Mario Kart* entertainment?



6 ◀▶ STAR FOX NINTENDO

It's still hanging in there as the sixth most wanted game, despite the vague 2005 release date and the lack of new revelations. We know Miyamoto wants us to look forward to it, and we have absolute faith in his project direction. It's just that it's been in development at Namco for much longer than we (and probably they) hoped for.

IN A NUTSHELL: Apes with drums. Vermin with guns. Namco, we notice a pattern…



7 ▼ METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES NINTENDO

Not long to go now before the anticipated sequel slams down on these shores. Savour that anticipation – come Christmas morning, you could be rolling up into a ball, entering the dark dimension and gunning up space pirates real nice and dead. Alternatively, you could switch your Gamecube on and have a blast on *Metroid Prime 2*. Hurr-hurr. Oink!

IN A NUTSHELL: Solid single-player? Check! Solid multiplayer? Hmmm…



8 (NEW ENTRY!) MARIO PARTY 6 NINTENDO

If it was just another *Mario Party* game, it wouldn't have made our top ten. But. BUT. Because the game will incorporate a play-by-microphone feature, we're considerably more up for it. As long as you get to do more than shout: "BUTT-SLAM HIS STINKING FAT HEAD, PLUMBER!"

IN A NUTSHELL: Are we crazy to look forward to a *Mario Party?* Please tell us.



9 (NEW ENTRY!) KILLER 7 CAPCOM

A million videogame miles away from *Mario Party*, *Killer 7's* back on the **NGC** radar thanks to some gruesome new shots and in-game action. Word is that "it's very Japanese". Which we assume to mean it's not a tired license-driven cash cow. It'll probably be an acquired taste, a stick-in-the-mind word-of-mouth treat that won't please the masses. That's good, right?

IN A NUTSHELL: What the hell..?



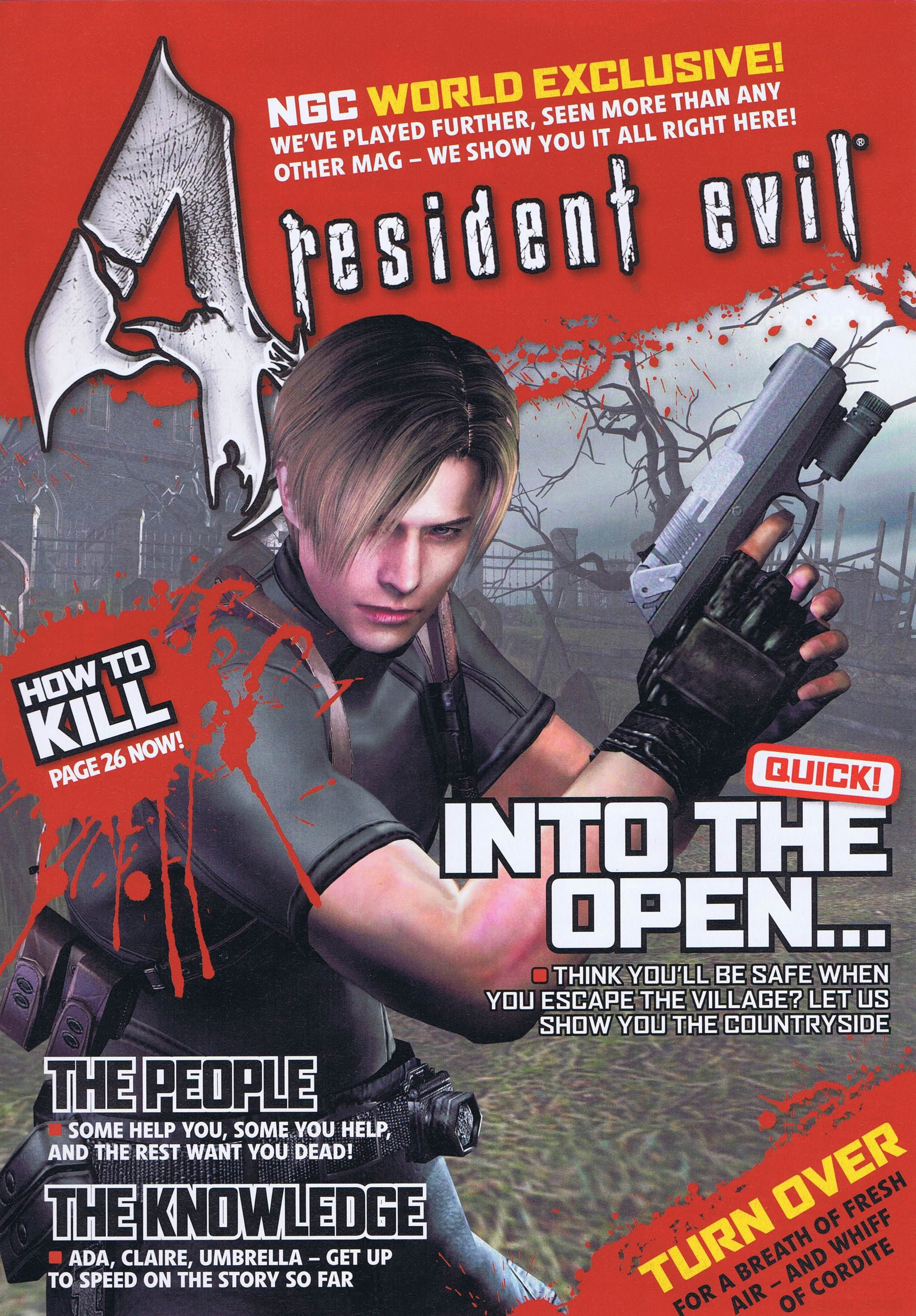
10 (NEW ENTRY!) YOSHI'S TOUCH & GO (DS) NINTENDO

Straight into our top ten on the strength of that name alone. And do you know what it is? You've seen a demo of it already – that fantastic minigame where you have to save Mario by drawing clouds beneath him as he tumbles through the sky. Looks innovative *and* fun.

IN A NUTSHELL: Keep your hands to yourself.


LIKE
turtles
martin
ethan
spidey
megaman
big wolf
sonic x
?


Then you'll love


NGC WORLD EXCLUSIVE!
WE'VE PLAYED FURTHER, SEEN MORE THAN ANY OTHER MAG – WE SHOW YOU IT ALL RIGHT HERE!
4 resident evil®
HOW TO KILL
PAGE 26 NOW!
QUICK!
INTO THE OPEN...
THINK YOU'LL BE SAFE WHEN YOU ESCAPE THE VILLAGE? LET US SHOW YOU THE COUNTRYSIDE
THE PEOPLE
SOME HELP YOU, SOME YOU HELP, AND THE REST WANT YOU DEAD!
THE KNOWLEDGE
ADA, CLAIRE, UMBRELLA – GET UP TO SPEED ON THE STORY SO FAR
TURN OVER
FOR A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – AND WHIFF OF CORDITE



It's truly infectious. Catch *Resi 4* fever from us.

Resident Evil 4 has been riding high in our 'Most Wanted' chart ever since we saw the new and vastly improved direction the series was taking. But in all honesty we never thought it would be *this* good. Which is why we've devoted an unprecedented amount of pages to it. We haven't got *this* carried away since we first saw *Perfect Dark* – and before that *Ocarina of Time*. That ought to give you some idea as to just how special a game this really is.

You see, Capcom have allowed only one magazine (us) to play way past the game's opening section. We're not talking about the village part that you've seen a thousand times over – that's just a tiny part of one glorious whole. We were privileged enough to take the game even further and explore deeper than any magazine before. Over the next 14 pages we're going to share our findings with you, cherry picking the very best of the countless new features, gameplay details and secrets we witnessed along the way. We'll also explain to you in great detail why *Resident Evil 4* is one of the most exciting thing to happen to videogaming in years…

VILLAGE PEOPLE

A place for everyone, and everyone in his place. This should reduce the risk of nasty surprises for you.

1 POLICE CAR

The game begins with Leon driving up to the outlying forest in the back of a police car. The two cops inside are too scared to come with you, which makes the comment 'you forgot your make-up or something?' when you go back to the car all the more hard to bear. We wanted to shoot them in the face, or at least puncture the tyres on the car. Unfortunately the game won't let you, but we were pleased to discover that the villagers rammed them into the ravine below not long after that.

2 KNOCK KNOCK

This house is your first encounter with the villagers. A man is warming his hands by the fire. You ask him about Ashley Graham, the President's daughter, and he attacks you. Kill him and go upstairs for some much-needed ammo, then look out the window. There are more villagers coming for you and they've locked the door behind you. Walk up to a nearby window and use one of the action command prompts to smash through to the outside…

3 FAMILIAR FACES

This hut has a typewriter! And some herbs! Smash open the boxes with your knife to save on ammo. Although it doesn't look like it, this really does still *feel* like Resident Evil…

4 HOUNDED

A bit strange, this. There's a dog stuck whining at the side of the path. He's got his leg stuck in a man trap. You can either put him out of his misery (ie shoot him in the head) or you can use the action command to set him free – whereupon he legs it into the forest. We released the hound. Wonder if we'll see him again? Hopefully we'll be rewarded for our kind deed…

WATCH OUT!

As Resident Evil 4 gets closer, and the anticipation reaches fever pitch, we return to the earlier instalments just one more time. Not just to get a better understanding of the game's origins, but to ruthlessly pick its prequels apart and expose a few things you might not have known about the series – plucking out those hidden secrets you may have missed. Look out for these secret files scattered around this Resi 4 Special for the kind Evil details you could only get if you've played the series as much as we have…



If you go down in the woods today…

It's the most-viewed part of *Resi 4* in the world this, but we though it was best to start at the beginning. We've played the demo so many times now this dreary forest village feels almost like home to us. If you haven't managed to import and play the demo (or you haven't seen anything on the game at all up until now), let us walk you through the opening stages and bring you right up to speed before we barf up the barrage of new stuff for you…

7 SURROUNDED

Now it gets nasty. Run into this house and barricade the door. There's a shotgun upstairs and you'll need it – entering triggers the arrival of Dr Chainsaw. The villagers, meanwhile, do anything they can to get you, entering through the windows and via the roof.

6 THE TOWER

When you reach the village, the inhabitants turn on you and chase you. The village is small and there's nowhere to hide. Climb this tower for extra ammo, but don't stay up there too long. The villagers aren't stupid and firebomb the place to get you back down.

8 THE CHURCH

Survive for long enough and this is where the old demo ends. A bell tolls in the distance and the villagers down-tools and shamble, zombie-like through this door. It's locked when you try to open it. Surely, there's got to be a key somewhere…

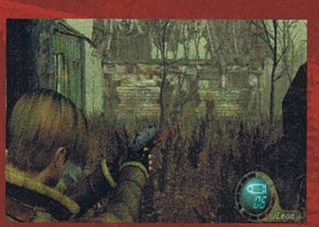
5 TRAPS!

This scared the living daylights out of us at first – there are more mantraps hidden in the undergrowth, and they have a nasty habit of trying to snap your legs off. Activate them from a distance with your pistol to hear the satisfying clang that means your pathway's safer.

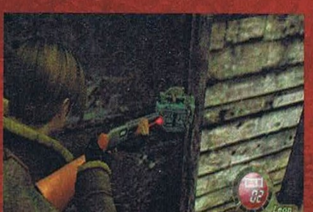
INTO THE HEART OF DARKNESS



The area outside the village is this outlying farmland. It's here that the big ogre-like creature is locked up – but he doesn't make an appearance yet. Instead you'll find a few villagers and livestock (and yes, you can slice up the cows). After a spot of exploring, leg it to the exit…



Now things take a more sinister turn. You creep down a dank, damp, treasure-filled tunnel and eventually the dirty browns of the village give way to this grey, misty, burnt-out landscape. It's riddled with traps and dynamite-throwing folk who blow holes out of the ruined buildings.



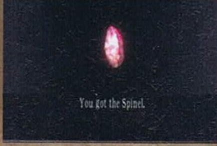
You'd better hope you still have some shotgun shells left. In between fending off the TNT-chucking villagers – who are best dealt with as with as quickly as possible – you need to find refuge somewhere. This house seems like a good place. Blast the lock off the door and hide inside.

TREASURE HUNT

One of the most important additions to Resident Evil, this. Scattered around the game world are new treasures for you to seek out…



Smashing crates and barrels, as well as killing enemies, reveals pick ups. The most common is cold hard cash, or PSTAs, for you to keep.



Even better are jewels and crystals. Some are pretty easy to find (like the ones in crates); others require a little more brain-work to discover.



In this cave, for example, is a hanging lamp. Shoot it and it erupts in flame, lighting the room and making the jewels shimmer.



Now that they've revealed themselves you have to shoot them out of the cave wall or ceiling to get at them.

MR DYNAMITE

Not afraid of a stick? Not even when it's a stick of explosive?



The first time you meet these dynamite folk, you'll probably get killed. If they grab you and you shake them off, get ready to leg it.



You need to take them out from a distance, so aim for their hands. This will knock dynamite out of their grasp, hopefully killing them.



One of the more spectacular methods of dispatching them is to wait until they've thrown the TNT and then blast it in the air, hurting everyone around you.

RESIDENT EVIL EASTER EGGS AND MORE...



RE3: Coming Soon
Check the cinema near the restaurant. Now playing: Biohazard 4.

CV: Don't Mind Me, Folks
Play the Battle Game in first-person mode and look between the crates in the third room. Rodrigo is, for some unknown reason, hiding there. Say hello if you like.



RE2: The Lonely Death of Chickenheart
Start a new game and reach the RPD building without picking anything up. You'll find a new zombie in the tunnel under the police department: Brad Vickers, formerly of the STARS Alpha Team. He's carrying the key to the locker in the darkroom.

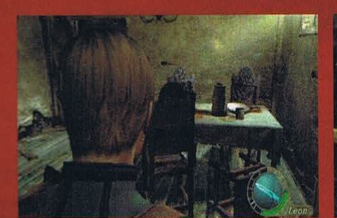
RE2: Quick Change
Find a room with a pack of zombies who're all dressed differently, kill all but one, then leave the room and re-enter. The zombies' clothing will change each time you do.





Dynamite with a Laser Beam
Someone on the Resident Evil team appears to be a big Queen fan. Claire's vests in RE2 and CV feature logos that say 'Made in Heaven' and "Let Me Live', while Billy's intricate tattoo in Zero, if turned clockwise, appears to read 'Mother Love'. These are the second, third, and fourth tracks on Queen's Made in Heaven album.

The big question, the one thing we were dying to know ever since we played the first ever demo had to be, "What happens when Leon leaves the village?" Where does he go? What does he do? You're about to find out…



■ *Resi 4* is always stunning to look at, but it's incredibly subtle with it. This room is so delicately lit and textured, you can almost *taste* the musty air. The table ahead of you is covered with blood and dirty crockery and the adjacent room houses a cupboard that's rattling menacingly…



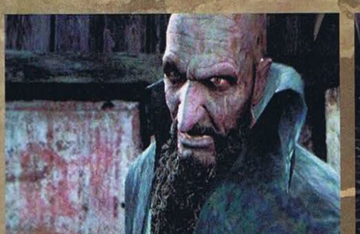
■ After a sneaky trip to the office toilet, we decide to open the cupboard up, expecting some kind of head-munching behemoth to emerge, crashing through the wood, claws a-flailing. Not so. Instead a bloke falls to the floor bound and gagged – all revealed via a slick cut-scene.



■ It's Louis! We've seen him in the trailers. He's an ex-cop like Leon, and he's got himself caught up in whatever it is the villagers are concocting. He knows where the president's daughter is too. In a church somewhere, that can only be accessed through the door those villagers disappeared through…

SMOOTH AS SILK

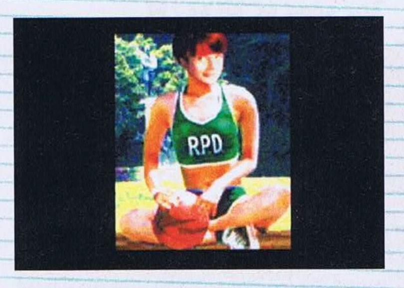
You may have noticed that all the screenshots around these pages are in widescreen. It really does make a difference to the overall atmosphere and presentation of the game, particularly when a cut-scene initiates itself. Rather than jarring to another screen ratio, the game flows smoothly from gameplay to cinematic, and because all scenes use the game's engine the action and storytelling sections are always seamless. It's another example of the superb production values this game has.



BIG DADDY

It's during your meeting with Louis that you come across this guy. He's a gigantic bearded monstrosity of a man with scary eyes and a penchant for kicking your ass. When Leon first meets him, he tries to give him a kicking but fails miserably. He catches Leon's leg and throws him to the corner of the room. So who is he? Well, it turns out he's the chief of the villagers. He's got a mansion house just outside the village, complete with portraits of himself. For some reason, though, he decides not to kill Leon when he has the chance. Maybe it's Leon's foppish hair and pretty-boy looks. Our money's on something altogether more sinister, though…

RE2: Leon bites back.
There are several rooms where Leon can fire his shotgun at the player, causing bullet holes to appear on your screen



RE2: Have You Seen Me?
Check the messy desk in the STARS office 50 times to find a roll of film. Develop it in the darkroom to get a picture of Rebecca.

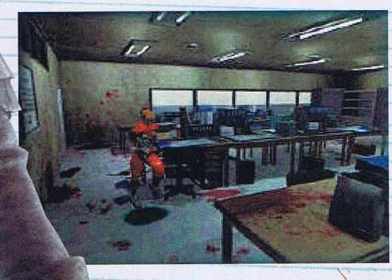
OBSCURE SECRETS

RE3: Homing Missiles
On your second time through Hard mode, defeat Nemesis every time he appears to get the Infinite Ammo Pack. Combine it with the Mine Launcher to get homing mines!

RE3: Mikhail's Second-to-Last Stand
Get two of the items you need to repair the streetcar, but not all three, and go back to see Mikhail kicking zombie ass.

RE3: Hear From Barry
At the end of RE3, when Carlos is fussing with the radio in the tower, leave via the hall door and come back in. You'll hear a garbled radio transmission from Barry Burton.

CV: "I've Got You Now!"
When fighting Nosferatu, shoot at his heart with Alfred's sniper rifle. If you hit it straight on, you'll see a hidden cut-scene.



YOU'LL NEVER PLAY: RESIDENT EVIL 1.5

In 1996, at the Tokyo Game Show, Capcom showed a ten-second clip of a sequel to Resident Evil. It showed a city under siege, as an outnumbered group of survivors waged a desperate battle against a horde of undead.

However, when it was about 70-80% complete, Shinji Mikami, the game's producer, pulled the plug. His stated reasons were bland environments, blander zombies, and a script that reputedly horrified the writer brought in to review it. Mikami and his team started from scratch, and two years later, would release the version of RE2 that we know and love. The cancelled game became known as Resident Evil 1.5.

1.5 was a more ambitious game than that which replaced it. The playable characters were a younger Leon Kennedy, and motocross racer Elza Walker. As you progressed, Leon and Elza's outfits would become bloodstained and torn; you could replace their clothes, which would change their appearance.

The members of 1.5's cast were similar to those of RE2's. Ada Wong was a researcher for Umbrella rather than a spy, and the Birkin family were a group of shellshocked survivors who helped Leon rather than hindered him.

A BIT OF LIGHT READING: WESKER'S REPORTS

Wesker, since his resurrection in CV, has found new employment as the plot-hole sealant for the entire RE series – mainly due to 'Wesker's Reports', which attempt to address many unsolved mysteries in the Resident Evil plotline.



The first Wesker's Report was on a special bonus disc sold with the fifth-anniversary edition of Code Veronica X. In it, Wesker claims to have saved Ada Wong at the end of RE2, and to have staved off his death in RE with a special virus. However, due to several continuity errors, its usefulness to the serious RE fan is limited.
Wesker's Report 2 first appeared in 2002 on Capcom of Japan's website. The report takes the form of several diary entries sent from Wesker to Ada Wong. They fill in details about the history of RE, such as the origins of the G-Virus. Most interesting is an observation made by Wesker: by situating the Arklay lab in the middle of the Raccoon Forest, Umbrella insured that a T-Virus outbreak was almost guaranteed to spread to the city. It's as though they wanted it to happen...

EVIL MEDIA



The comics
Wildstorm published a glossy Resident Evil magazine in 1999. It ran for five issues, each of which contained two to four short stories featuring the STARS, original characters, Umbrella's monsters or a combination thereof. While the art's often quite good, especially when done by Carlos D'Anda, the writing was terrible.
Wildstorm later gave it another go with the publication of Fire & Ice, a four-issue series that followed the adventures of the STARS Charlie team. It is (claims our expert) 'almost totally unreadable'.

The manshua
There've been a few Chinese comic adaptations of the RE games and, like most Chinese comics, they're terrific, exaggerated fun. As you might expect, they feature over-the-top martial-arts action. DC Comics have published a translated version of the Hong Kong Code Veronica comics, which is available from Amazon.
The manshua beat the American comics from a standing start, if only for the sheer amusement value of watching characters flip around and punch out Tyrants.





'A' IS FOR 'ACTION'

Action Commands are one of the main additions to the series. At certain key moments you'll be invited to stab at the A button – with different effects, from environmental interaction to attacks...





- Walk up to any low-level ledges or fences and you'll be able to vault over them. This is a simple but handy technique for putting a little distance between yourself and anyone on your tail.



- Another A-button command is especially useful in the interior sections. If you're running into a hut to hide, look for any furniture you can use to barricade the door or windows.



- These sequences turned up a couple of times when we played. Some villagers roll a boulder at you and you have to run before dodging out of the way.



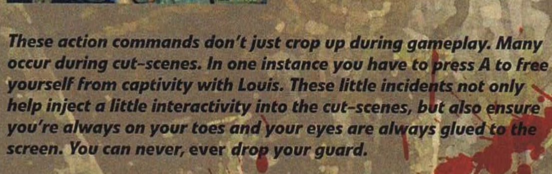
- If you're on high ground and there aren't any ladders, leap off the edge. If anyone's following, turn around and shoot them as they hit the ground.



- It's inevitable that you'll get caught at some point. Shake the analogue stick as fast as you can. Success means you kick them away. Failure means, well, *pain*.



- You can use the action command to leap over any gaps in your path. Beware, though: the enemy can also follow you over these, so make sure you watch your back after you've crossed.



These action commands don't just crop up during gameplay. Many occur during cut-scenes. In one instance you have to press A to free yourself from captivity with Louis. These little incidents not only help inject a little interactivity into the cut-scenes, but also ensure you're always on your toes and your eyes are always glued to the screen. You can never, ever drop your guard.

UNDER PRESSURE

The overriding feeling that anyone gets while playing *RE4* – even in the now-familiar village demo – is one of tension, pressure and panic. Unlike in previous *Resident Evil* games, the enemies you encounter aren't just shambling zombies. They're clever, they're fast and not only are they relentless in their pursuit of Leon, they often attack en masse. In the parts of the game that we played (around two to three hours into the whole thing), we encountered a number of areas that had a seemingly limitless supply of enemies. Take this area as an example…



This is the mine. You get here just after the farmland area and, just like the village, it's a fairly large, wide-open location with an infinite supply of enemies.



The area is made up of outhouses and thin gantries. You need to get to the exit on the other side – but the door is locked. To pass through you have to find two halves of an emblem.



The thin gantries make it difficult to slip past your pursuers. Your best bet is to get up to high ground and kick any ladders they use to get at you, then use your shotgun to clear the path ahead.



Enemies here respawn. It's impossible to kill everyone, which means you *always* have a pack of villagers hunting you down at every turn. As a result the best tactic is to run like hell, only using ammunition when you really need to.

AND RELAX…

Linking these open, enemy-respawning areas are the more pedestrian, corridor-like sections. While they often *look* open for exploration, you're essentially forced down a predetermined path, so you can't get off the beaten track. Enemies in these areas don't respawn once you've killed them, meaning you can take a breather. These different styles of play really help the pacing of the game, with the less hectic areas getting capped off by situations which induce blind panic and terror. Just what the doctor ordered.

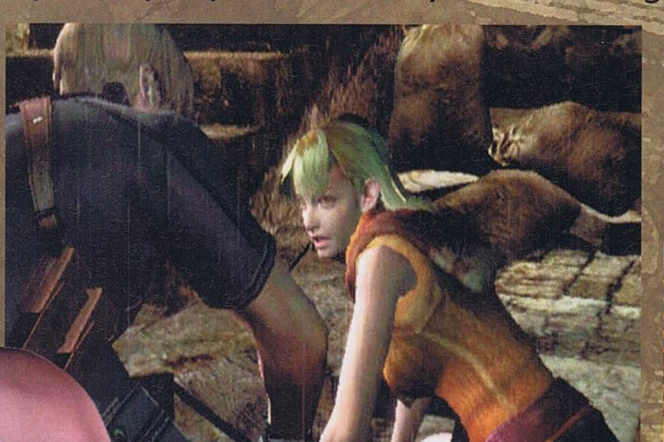






WHO'S THAT GIRL?

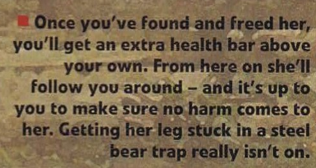
This is Ashley Gardner – she's the US President's daughter and rescuing her from her captors is your primary objective when you start the game…



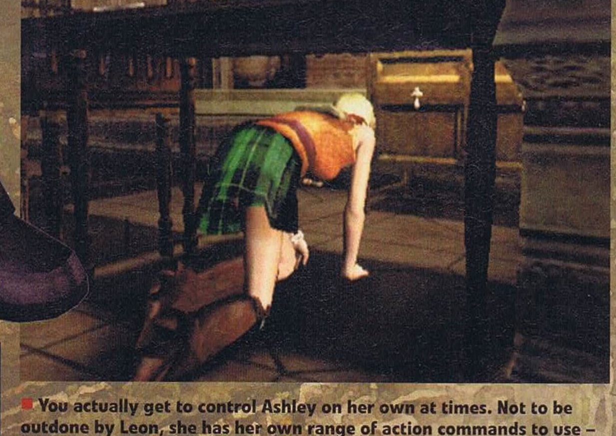
Actually *finding* Ashley is hardly a pushover, but getting her out alive and back to her father is going to be even tougher. Turns out she's been kidnapped by a sect called Los Iluminados – and a real vicious bunch they are too.



Once you've found and freed her, you'll get an extra health bar above your own. From here on she'll follow you around – and it's up to you to make sure no harm comes to her. Getting her leg stuck in a steel bear trap really isn't on.

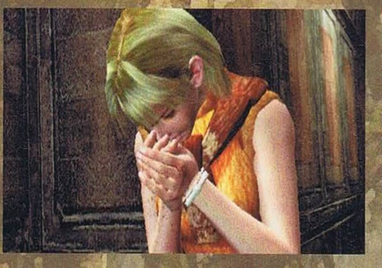


Unfortunately, there will be occasions where you're forced to part company. In this instance a portcullis separates you, and on another occasion Ashley gets stuck in a booby trap mounted on a revolving door. Forcing you to find her *again*.



You actually get to control Ashley on her own at times. Not to be outdone by Leon, she has her own range of action commands to use – but don't expect her to do the aggressive stuff like elbow anyone in the face. Instead, Ashley can, um, crawl under tables.

Los Iluminados are eager to get her back, and will stop at nothing to do so. In one instance, she's being carried away by one of the sect members and you have to snipe at him from a gallery to free her from his grasp.



Unfortunately, it seems that she's not feeling particularly well. She's infected with something that's making her cough up blood. Charming. Whether it's infectious, or whether it's the same 'infection' as the villagers have, is as yet unknown…

LADY IN RED

Probably the biggest surprise we've had so far. While we were snooping around the village chief's house, we explored an area he seemed to want to keep private. After an initial warning, it didn't look like he was going to do us any more favours and then, just a hair's breadth from getting properly stomped into the ground, a mystery woman came to our rescue. Dressed in a red dress, with a black dagger-cut bob, she was a pretty mean shot with a pistol. Mean enough to cause a distraction so that we could make good our escape.



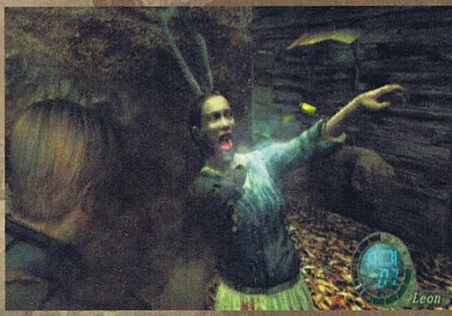
So who is she? Well, if you ask us, it can only be one of three people. Rebecca Chambers, Jill Valentine or Ada Wong. We doubt it's Rebecca – she really has nothing to do with Leon plot-wise. Jill has no links either, and anyway the hair colour isn't right. If you ask us, it *has* to be Ada Wong. She works for an 'Agency' like Leon. She and Leon had a bit of a 'thing' for each other in *Resident Evil 2* and both the haircut and dress colour match. Sure, she may have changed either by now, but we reckon this is Capcom's way of giving us a subtle hint.



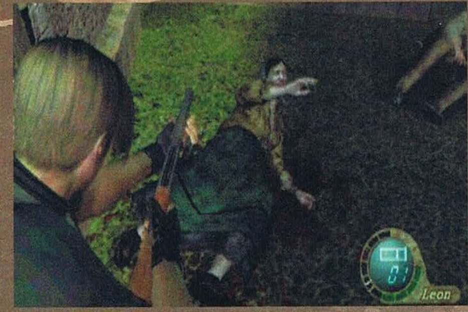
■ When they're not lunging at you from around corners they're chucking 12 inches of steel at your head.

WICKED WITCHES

They're not really witches, they're evil farmers' wives armed with an infinite supply of kitchen knives.



■ If you get grabbed by one, shake the analogue stick to stop yourself from getting slammed to the ground.



■ The pitchfork witches have quite a range. Get your knife out and slash them into the floor.

GET JILL'S SECRET DIARY

In RE3, each file you read appears in a set place on Jill's file screen. Pick them up in order, and Jill's Diary will replace the Game Instructions #1 file. This tells the story of what Jill did between RE and RE3.
For a file to 'count' towards Jill's Diary, you must scroll all the way to the end and press Exit, rather than just cancelling out of the file's screen as fast as you can.



No. 1, No. 2: Game Instructions
Already in your inventory when you start the game.
No. 3: Clock Tower Postcard
Lying on the counter in the bar where you meet Brad.
No. 4: Photo A
In the alley that separates Uptown and Downtown Raccoon, on one of the dead bodies.
No. 5: Marvin's Report
Check the dead cop in the office in the RPD building.
No. 6: David's Memo
On the table in the darkroom.
No. 7: Fax from Kendo
In the fax machine in the STARS office.
No. 8: Merc's Diary
Take the bullets from the dead man in an alleyway in Uptown Raccoon
No. 9: City Guide
On a table in the restaurant.
No. 10: Photo B
In the lobby of the Raccoon Press.
No. 11: Photo C
On a desk in the Raccoon Press office.
No. 12: Reporter's Notebook
On a cabinet in the Raccoon Press office.
No. 13: Mechanic's Memo
Check the panel in the streetcar.
No. 14: Manager's Report
Use the remote control in the sales office.
No. 15: Business Fax
Check the chest of drawers near the windows.
No. 16: Dario's Memo
After speaking to Carlos and Nicholai in the trolley car, return to the warehouse from the start. The memo's in the open trailer.
No. 17: Operation Instructions
Pick up the mine thrower in the clock tower lobby for this one.
No. 18: Picture Postcard
In the clock tower library.
No. 19: Mercenary's Pocketbook
On the dead man near the clock puzzle.
No. 20: Director's Diary
In the doctor's office in the hospital.
No. 21: Photo D
In the back room on the fourth floor of the hospital.
No. 22: Medical Instruction Manual
Sitting on a counter in the laboratory in the hospital basement.
No. 23: Photo E
In the safe room by the park entrance.
No. 24: Written Orders to the Supervisors
Enter the park and head east. Search the dead men.
No. 25: Supervisor's Report
In the secret room behind the tool shed in the graveyard, on the table.
No. 26: Fax from HQ
In the secret room behind the tool shed in the graveyard, on the board.
No. 27: Manager's Diary
In the Dead Factory lounge.
No. 28: Security Manual
In the Dead Factory's monitor room.
No. 29: Incinerator Manual
On the wall next to the ladder in the room below the control tower.
No. 30: Classified Photo
On the ground in the junkyard.

YOU'RE A LONG TIME DEAD

There are hundreds of enemies in the game that need taking care of, so it's a good idea to familiarise your assorted weaponry with their 'Key Hit Zones' as soon as is humanly possible.

HEAD



There are a couple of possibilities when it comes to smashing the old swede. On many occasions you'll take aim at a villager's head and shoot, only for them to throw their hands up in pain yet keep coming at you moments later. Even so, more shots ensure they're not around much longer. The alternative is both spectacular and relentlessly satisfying. A shotgun blast to the face at point-blank range will result in a bloody explosion. On many occasions, the decapitated enemy will shamble on for a few seconds, blood spurting from their neck, before they crumble to their knees. In a fantastic little touch, headshots like this reward you with better pick-ups.

CHEST

Quite a handy hit-zone this, actually. If you're being attacked by a large group and one villager is taking the initiative, wait until he gets close and let him have it with both barrels to the chest. The force of the impact will send him flying back into the group behind, making them stumble a little and giving you vital seconds to GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE.



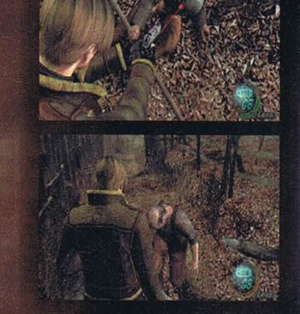
THIGH

Like the shoulders, this is really a wasted bullet. It will stun the enemy very briefly, but not do much else. Concentrating on this area will see you around ten bullets down with an army of angry farmers stomping you into the ground.



STOMACH & GROIN

Chances are you'll try the latter option within seconds of meeting your first villager. It's far too tempting, isn't it? Suffice to say, a shot here will stop a foe in their tracks – but won't knock them over. Instead they'll double up in pain. Groin shots stun them long enough for you to let off a couple more shots into the back of their head.



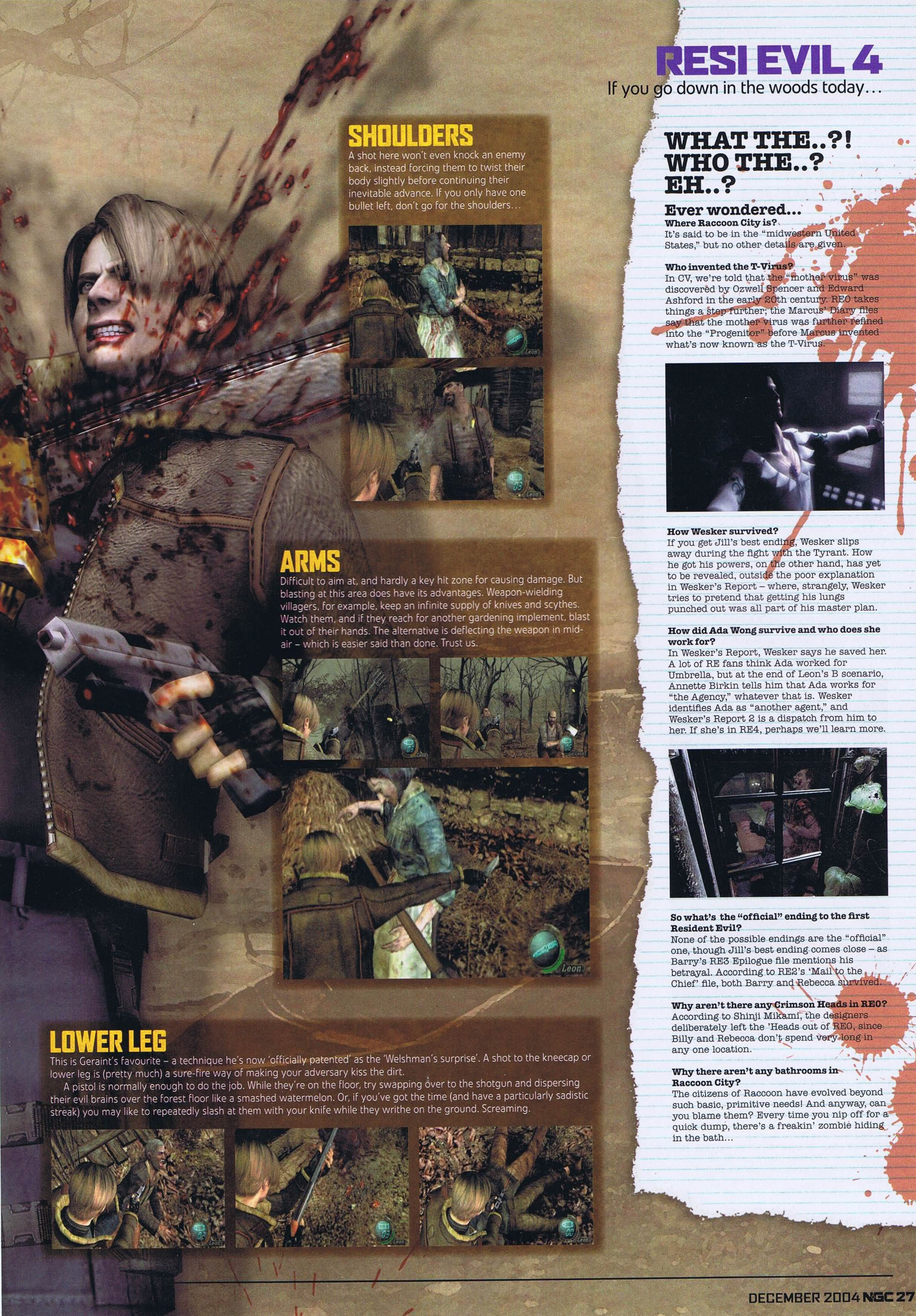
KICK ASS TAKE NAME

One great tactic is to stun the enemy at point-blank range. A shot pretty much anywhere will do this. Once they've been stunned (and depending on whether you're close enough) another action prompt will appear. Hit A and you'll kick the enemy in the face. If there are others around him, he'll knock into anyone behind.









SHOULDERS

A shot here won't even knock an enemy back, instead forcing them to twist their body slightly before continuing their inevitable advance. If you only have one bullet left, don't go for the shoulders…

ARMS

Difficult to aim at, and hardly a key hit zone for causing damage. But blasting at this area does have its advantages. Weapon-wielding villagers, for example, keep an infinite supply of knives and scythes. Watch them, and if they reach for another gardening implement, blast it out of their hands. The alternative is deflecting the weapon in mid-air – which is easier said than done. Trust us.

LOWER LEG

This is Geraint's favourite – a technique he's now 'officially patented' as the 'Welshman's surprise'. A shot to the kneecap or lower leg is (pretty much) a sure-fire way of making your adversary kiss the dirt.

A pistol is normally enough to do the job. While they're on the floor, try swapping over to the shotgun and dispersing their evil brains over the forest floor like a smashed watermelon. Or, if you've got the time (and have a particularly sadistic streak) you may like to repeatedly slash at them with your knife while they writhe on the ground. Screaming.

WHAT THE..?! WHO THE..? EH..?

Ever wondered…

Where Raccoon City is?
It's said to be in the "midwestern United States," but no other details are given.

Who invented the T-Virus?
In CV, we're told that the "mother virus" was discovered by Ozwell Spencer and Edward Ashford in the early 20th century. RE0 takes things a step further; the Marcus' Diary files say that the mother virus was further refined into the "Progenitor" before Marcus invented what's now known as the T-Virus.

How Wesker survived?
If you get Jill's best ending, Wesker slips away during the fight with the Tyrant. How he got his powers, on the other hand, has yet to be revealed, outside the poor explanation in Wesker's Report – where, strangely, Wesker tries to pretend that getting his lungs punched out was all part of his master plan.

How did Ada Wong survive and who does she work for?
In Wesker's Report, Wesker says he saved her. A lot of RE fans think Ada worked for Umbrella, but at the end of Leon's B scenario, Annette Birkin tells him that Ada works for "the Agency," whatever that is. Wesker identifies Ada as "another agent," and Wesker's Report 2 is a dispatch from him to her. If she's in RE4, perhaps we'll learn more.

So what's the "official" ending to the first Resident Evil?
None of the possible endings are the "official" one, though Jill's best ending comes close – as Barry's RE3 Epilogue file mentions his betrayal. According to RE2's 'Mail to the Chief' file, both Barry and Rebecca survived.

Why aren't there any Crimson Heads in RE0?
According to Shinji Mikami, the designers deliberately left the 'Heads out of RE0, since Billy and Rebecca don't spend very long in any one location.

Why there aren't any bathrooms in Raccoon City?
The citizens of Raccoon have evolved beyond such basic, primitive needs! And anyway, can you blame them? Every time you nip off for a quick dump, there's a freakin' zombie hiding in the bath…

MISTAKES AND BLOOPERS

RE: Too Many Bullets
The gunshot you hear at the start of the game presumably came from Kenneth Sullivan fighting off a zombie, but in Kenneth's Film, he fires three times.

RE2/RE3: Ninja Quarantine
No-one's quite sure how Leon and Claire made it into Raccoon City, or how they managed to avoid hearing about the outbreak of sickness there. In RE3, we're told that there's a quarantine in place that's being enforced by the military, but Raccoon City's a ghost town at the start of RE2.

RE2: The Magical Reappearing Pipe
In Leon B, you'll fight the G-Type in the sewer access room. He'll rip a chunk of railing up to hit you with, but if you look in this room before the fight, that chunk of railing isn't there in the first place.

RE2: I Feel Much Better Now, Thanks
At the end of Claire A, when Claire sees Leon on the surveillance monitors, Leon's bandages have disappeared.

RE2: Ada Does Impressions
In Leon A, when Ada catches up with Annette, Claire will speak during the flashback FMV.

RE3: Chris's Other Job
The Mercenary's Diary file is written in a book labelled "Diary of Chris Redfield."

RE3: I Think You Have a Wrong Number
The area code on the Grady's Inn sign in RE3's opening movie is 212, which places it on New York's Manhattan Island. This is somewhat unlikely.



RE3: Lucky Guess
No-one ever tells Jill Nicholai's first name, but she knows it when he gets blown up in the gas station.



RE3: It's Not Like He Used His Brain
Brad Vickers gets killed when Nemesis jams a tentacle violently through his head. By the rules that RE zombies operate under, this means his subsequent zombification is theoretically impossible.

CV: Odd Weather We're Having
It doesn't snow in Antarctica. It's too cold. It is so cold, in fact, that Claire and Steve should've died of exposure, but we shan't dwell on that.

IN AT THE DEEP END

You've got through the mines and you've had a run in with the village chief – you still need to find Ashley…



Search the chief's mansion and you'll find the key to the door in that church-like building that the villagers disappeared into.



Once it's in your possession you need to head downstairs again. We're impressed by the lack of irritating stair-animation loading screen…



Everything's quiet in the mansion. Scout around and steal whatever ammo and health you can, then head back to the village.



It's not that easy, though. There's another chainsaw-toting maniac waiting outside.



You can shoot the unfortunate lummox through the door, but he can also smash through it himself.



Stay just inside the door – the door frame helps channel him into the barrel of your shotgun.



Back in the village, don't stop to fight, just get to the church as quickly as you possibly can.



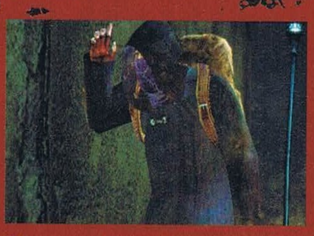
So *this* is where they went! Inside, you'll find a trapdoor leading to a tunnel – reload and drop down.



You'll find a spiral staircase leading down into a small cave. There's no-one around apart from…



It's a merchant! He pops up at various points throughout the game.



You can sell your treasures and buy new weapons and ammo from him.



This is one of the most unexpected and useful additions to *Resi*.



You eventually emerge from the tunnel into an eerie tree-lined pass cloaked with mist.



A short walk takes you to a graveyard which, apart from the odd villager, is deserted.



And there it is – the church that Louis told you about. Now you just need to find a way in…



GONE FISHING

Near the church we found a path that led to a swamp.


Once on the other side we found a lake and a boat. You can drive it around freely until your anchor gets caught on the back of a massive aqua-beast.


It tows you around the water at high speed – making you focus on avoiding obstacles while chucking harpoons at the gigantic mutant tug-boat.


If you hit something in the water, you get thrown out of the boat, forcing you to hammer A to swim back to safety before you're eaten.


Worse still, the beast frequently charges your boat, so you have to throw harpoons into its mouth in a desperate attempt to force it back under the water.


Keep chucking your harpoons at it and eventually you'll see it off. However, just when you think it's over, it has one last, very nasty surprise up its sleeve.

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE!



TRINKETS

Dotted around the game world are these hanging baubles. They're tucked away in hard-to-find places. We don't know *exactly* what happens when you shoot them, but apparently they're part of a secret side-game. Maybe shooting them is the key to unlocking extra goodies.





UPGRADE!

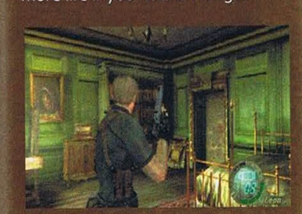
You can spend money with the merchant 'levelling up' your weapons. Each weapon seems to have four areas to improve: firing rate, power, reloading rate and bullet capacity. This would help make weaker weapons like the pistol very handy later on.





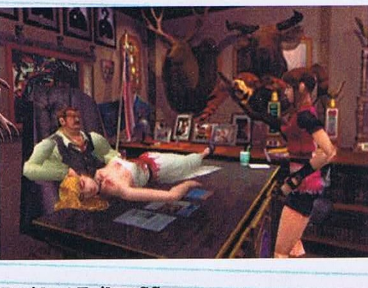
SPICE OF LIFE

Just as in previous *Resident Evil* games, you can combine herbs for added effect. If you find red, yellow and green herbs and mix them you can *extend* your life bar. This makes you rethink your herb usage, as there may be the chance to gain more life if you hold on longer.



DIFFERENT VERSIONS

Many of the RE games have appeared on multiple systems, with changes being made each time it's ported. This is the kind of clever marketing on Capcom's part which has led to us owning five different versions of Resident Evil 2. Something we admit we're not wholly pleased about.



Resident Evil on GC
In the original game, Richard would die whether you brought him the serum or not; Rebecca is no longer waiting in ambush in the mansion infirmary; zombies and Hunters couldn't open doors; neither Barry nor Rebecca would bother to help you against the Tyrant; and Lisa Trevor was nowhere to be found. The original also looked like total ass and the voice acting made us want to fill our ears with lard.

Resident Evil 2 on N64
Most of the time, a port of RE2 is a port of the PC version, so you get the gallery, 3D models, Extreme Battle Game and more difficulty options. The N64 version is different, as it offers a unique option after you beat both scenarios. Called the Randomizer, this changes most of the ammo and herbs into different items.



Code Veronica on Dreamcast
The original version of CV had fewer cut-scenes featuring Wesker. He played a remarkably small part in the game, disappearing entirely right before Chris's fight with Alexia. The ending omits the entire fistfight between Chris and Wesker.

DID YOU KNOW…

- Brad Vickers is the only character to die in two games: RE2 and RE3. Other characters have died and returned as zombies, but Brad's the only one to drag it out like that.
- It takes a frantic 161 stabs with the knife to kill Nemesis.
- The upside-down flag in the RPD operations room is indicative of a state of emergency, and isn't actually a mistake.
- Both Claire and Leon have different bonus costumes in the N64 version of RE2.
- The voice actress who played Jill in RE3, Catherine Disher, also played Natalie Lambert on the television series Forever Knight. Claire is the only character who's had the same voice actress (Alyson Court) in every game she's been in.
- The female hostage in RE3's Mercenaries minigame is meant to be Lucia Rosso, Dario's daughter.
- Shinji Mikami originally wanted to call RE3 Biohazard 1.9.
- According to rumour, Steve's role in Code Veronica was originally meant to go to Leon, including Steve's death at the end of the game. The decision was scrapped due to Leon's popularity.

MINIGAMES

RE2: The Fourth Survivor
To unlock: defeat both scenarios getting an A ranking
Hunk, the lone survivor of the group that shot William Birkin, wakes up at the RPD sewer entrance with a sample of the G-Virus. With limited ammunition and health, fight your way through the monster-infested RPD to reach the rooftop.

This is a test of your ability to dodge monsters. Ideally, don't fire a shot until you reach the first floor of the RPD. Save your ammo for Ivies and the Mr. X waiting for you near the roof.

RE2: Tofu's Adventure
To unlock: clear six scenarios on the same file
Can you clear Hunk's scenario with only a knife and three herbs?



RE2: Extreme Battle Game
To unlock: clear either scenario getting an A ranking
A virus has been detected inside the escape train in the Umbrella lab. As Ada, Claire, Leon or Chris, blast your way back to the RPD and search it for four special bombs. Each character has a unique arsenal, and nearly every room is packed with enemies.

RE3: The Mercenaries: Operation Mad Jackal
To unlock: beat the game on either difficulty
Carlos, Nicholai, and Mikhail have had bombs implanted in their bodies. When the game starts, the bombs' two-minute timer starts. You get bonus time whenever you kill a monster or save a survivor; when time runs out, you explode.

There are six 'secret spots' in Mad Jackal that you can hit for time bonuses. The dead-end alleyway next to the Raccoon Press office, the dessert tray in the restaurant, the low-voltage room's control panel, the back wall of the alley near the fire hose, the dead man who had Photo A and the dead cop who had the shotgun. Hit the first one for two seconds. Every spot you hit thereafter doubles the bonus, so if you hit them all, you'll earn 64 seconds off the last spot.

RE:CV: Battle Game
Unlock: beat the game
As Chris, Claire, Steve or Wesker, battle through a random assortment of areas from the main game. You must kill every monster in each room if you want to reach the end, where you'll take on one of the bosses. The silver door in the 12th room leads to the game room. Check the lit-up slot machine to find a weapon or a bonus file. The surreal Diary of D.I.J. Wesker will usually give you a Magnum, which you need to defeat the boss.

RE0: Leech Hunter
Unlock: beat the game
Rebecca and Billy have returned to the military training facility to collect a hundred Leech Charms, which are scattered throughout the area.

This is an easy minigame to win, since all you have to do is get back to the lobby and use the front door, but it's hard to complete due to the randomly placed Charms. Your best bet is to 'flag' each one by opting not to pick them up, then use your map once you've killed most of the monsters.

NEW AND IMPROVED?

Of course it is – and you know you want it. We certainly can't wait for full code.



Phew! Managed to soak in all that information yet? If you hadn't guessed from reading the last 12 pages, *Resident Evil 4* is an absolutely blinding game. No. 'Blinding' doesn't do it justice – it's a *phenomenal* game.

It's rich, not just in the way that it looks, but in the way that it evokes so many feelings, so many emotions as you play. Trepidation, sensing the calm before the storm. Wonder, as you access new areas and meet new challenges. Horror, as you find yourself indulging your own morbid curiosity (brutally hacking at enemies' anatomy like a five-year-old plucking the wings of a butterfly) and then, most importantly, absolute terror and blind panic as you flee from them, trying to get some distance away so you can aim your last bullet somewhere it'll make a difference. Raccoon City and its zombie residents were never like this.

Don't get us wrong, *ReMake* and *Zero* were excellent games, but as handsome as they were, they always felt just a little bit tired and more than a little restrictive. Their pre-rendered backgrounds, loading screens and archaic camera and controls felt like shackles, preventing them from realising their true potential. *Resi 4*, then, has finally fulfilled the series' promise.

That's not to say that it's all change. Many of the old Resi trappings are still there. The control scheme is pretty much the same. Rotational movement with the analogue stick. The 180° turn. Hold down a shoulder button to aim – thereby rooting yourself to the spot. Hold a button to make your character run… etc. However, the over-the-shoulder camera view breathes so much fresh life into it, really putting you in the action rather than making you feel as though you're just a casual observer. It's so much more engrossing that you soon forgive the initial disappointment of realising that Leon doesn't actually have *full* analogue control for his smooth movements.

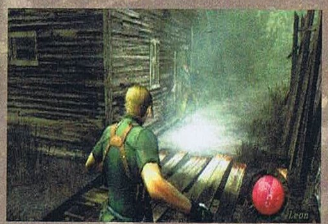
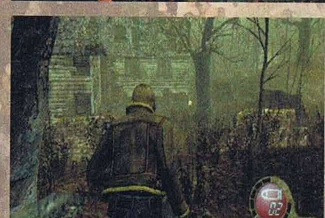
Almost every area has been tweaked and refreshed. There's now much more ammo, for example (although we still managed to run out at times). You don't have to use ribbons to save your game at the typewriters. The action flows seamlessly from area to area, with no door-opening sequences and, unbelievably, an almost complete absence of loading screens. With only a few seconds (at most) required to bring the next detailed area into view, it even puts *Metroid* to shame in this department. At a time when we find ourselves berating sequels and their reluctance to deviate from the templates laid down by their predecessors, *Resident Evil 4* feels brave, it feels fresh and re-invigorated, and the whole experience has been emboldened by the changes it brings.

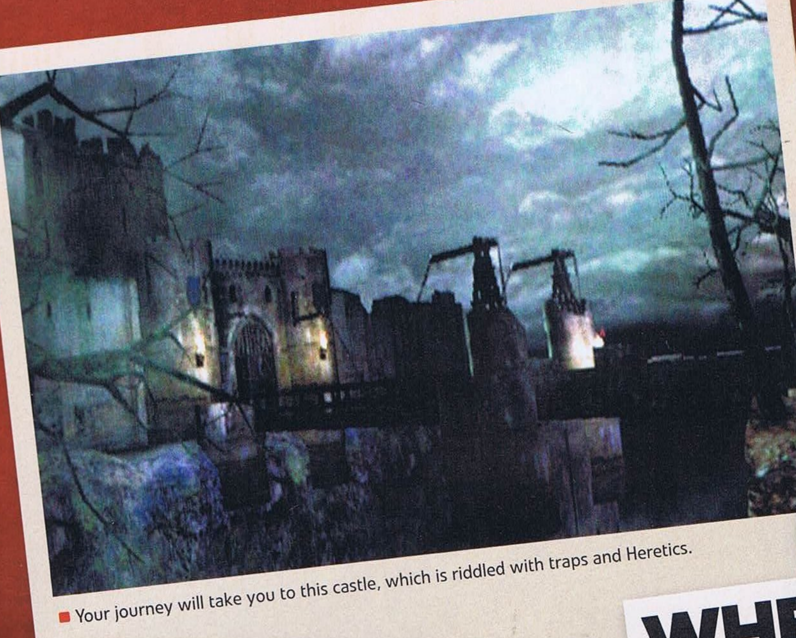
> "IT'S RICH IN THE WAY THAT IT EVOKES SO MANY FEELINGS AS YOU PLAY"

Of course, it's difficult to get an overall view of the game. To give you an idea of *Resi 4's* size, the village section that we're all now so familiar with is one third of just one subchapter. Exactly how many more levels there are to play we don't *exactly* know – but we're confident that any early misgivings we may have had about the game's potential size will be put to rest…

So there you have it. Short of coughing up blood onto the page, there really isn't much more we can give you. And if you're not as excited about it as we are now, then there must be something seriously wrong with you. It's brutal, unnerving and dripping with shocks. Gamecube's most adult game? Until *Killer 7* arrives…





Your journey will take you to this castle, which is riddled with traps and Heretics.

These Heretics are a damn sight nastier than the villagers – packing some shocking weapons to batter you with.

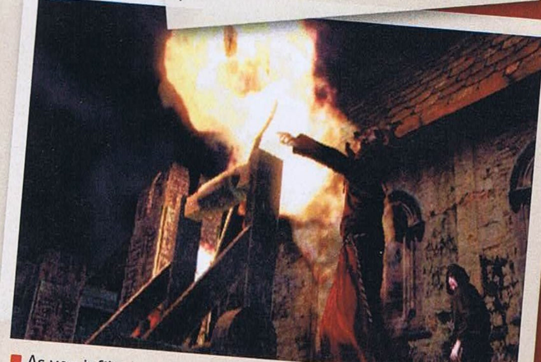


El Gigante, a huge ogre that's been locked up by the villagers, is unleashed to deal with you.

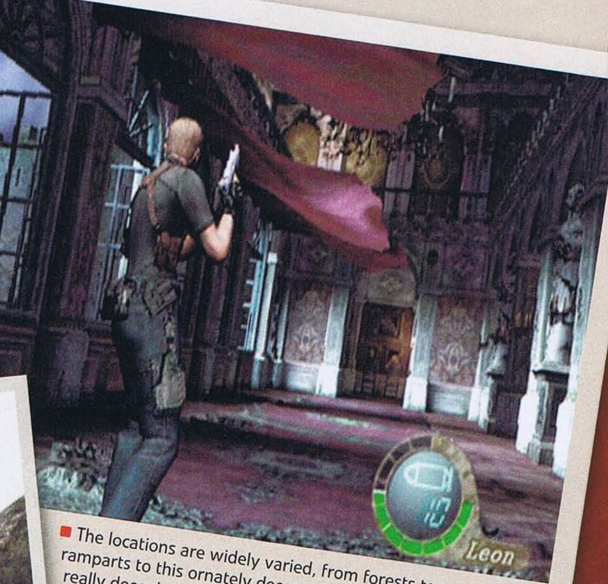
WHERE NEXT?

After the first boss, Leon and Ashley end up fighting their way through a huge trap-castle. We've seen that they end up back in the village they started from and we know that Leon isn't feeling particularly well… has he caught the same thing as the villagers? Or maybe Ashley's illness? And what exactly was Louis doing locked up in that cupboard? All these questions answered soon…


After you've seen off the lake's monster you're going to have to find a way in here.

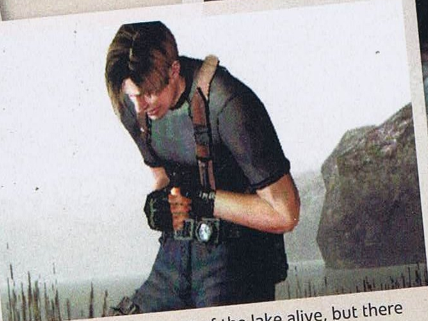

As you infiltrate the castle, Heretics catapult fiery rocks at you.


Hiding in this house, Leon and Ashley are smoked out by the villagers…



The locations are widely varied, from forests to swamps to ramparts to this ornately decorated castle hallway. This shot really doesn't do the scene justice; the movement on those curtains billowing in the wind is nothing short of fabulous.

We have no idea what's going on here, but by the looks of all that scaffolding things, the villagers have been really busy.

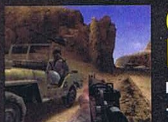

You've just made it out of the lake alive, but there seems to be something seriously wrong with Leon…

PREVIEWS





MARIO PARTY 6
■ Microphone control? Count us in! We said COUNT US… is this thing actually on? p36



CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR
■ There's no new *Medal of Honor* – so get your WWII kicks here. p39



METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
■ Samus returns – and Geraint won't stop smiling. p37



WARIO WARE INC 2
■ The catchiest game on GBA – see the sequel today! p40



MARIO POWER TENNIS
■ Same game, new name – this is going to be great… p38



YOSHI'S UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION p40

KILLER 7

If anyone tries to tell you that Gamecube's just 'for kids', introduce them to big Dan Smith…

The sharpest, oddest death-fest on any Nintendo system ever is starting to make a little more sense now. Harman Smith's the wheelchair-bound man who holds the key to defeating evil Kun Lan and his army of suicidal Heaven's Smile bomb squad. It's his seven different personalities – all hardened assassins – that you get to play in the game, as well as Harman himself.

You can switch between these personalities at key points throughout the game – only if you feel it's necessary (and you will). Each member of the Smith 'family' has three different special abilities – special attacks, puzzle-solving and the way they approach different environments.

In order to tap into these special abilities you'll need to absorb the blood from the people under the influence of Heaven's Smile that you nail during the course of the game. Those under the influence of the smile become walking bombs – and are the source of the panic that's spreading through the people and government that Kun Lan's trying to destroy.

The game itself is split into first-person shooter chunks where you head towards an objective shooting up Smilers along the way, plus sections that require more exploration and puzzle solving (using the different abilities of the seven personalities). Throw in some dark and sweary cut-scene plot development (there seems to be a lot of this from what we've seen) and you've got a game that doesn't seem as impenetrable and confusing as we first feared. We think.

It's definitely not a game you'll want to crack open at Christmas, though, (not that you can, because it's not out anywhere until early 2005). Cartoon violence it may be, but it's brutal – Heaven's Smile heads bursting like balloons full of tomato soup. The sky turning crimson as blood falls like rain. Limbs popping as sniper scopes are zoomed in and targeted with cruel precision. Your dear old nan would probably cough up her shortbread.

Capcom have one of the strongest, 'real gamer'-pleasing line-ups on Gamecube next year – with *Viewtiful Joe 2* (s'alright), *Resident Evil 4* and *Killer 7* all arriving within the space of three months. Who needs Revolution just yet..?



THE KNOWLEDGE
- Adult comic-book visual style.
- Seven different assassin 'personalities' to play.
- Blend of FPS and third-person action adventure.
- Swearing.

FACTFILE
Who's making it?
Capcom (and Grasshopper)

What have they done before?
Resident Evil (NGC/72 89%)
The classic – although *Resi 4* will confine it to the history books.

"Nothing has to make sense"



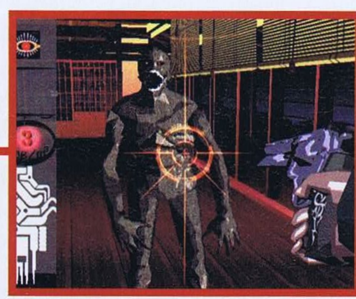
CHRISTOPHER MILLS

Millsy. He's an informant – someone who meets up with Garcian to give him jobs. Jobs like: go to this place, kill everyone you find there... job done! We're not keen on his mustard-coloured suit.



KUN LAN

Harman's nemesis, Kun Lan is the creator of the Heaven's Smiles – he's a man who wants to destroy the government of the fictitious country. Your ultimate goal in the game is to kill Kun Lan.



HEAVEN'S SMILES

Normal people who are opposed to the government get turned into walking, chomping time bombs by the 'Heaven's Smile' phenomenon. These form the enemies you meet in *Killer 7*.



COYOTE SMITH

This Latino thug's super-violent and is the misfit of the Smith personalities – he doesn't like the rest much. He has 'unsettled issues' and a modified Enfield gun – not a good mix...



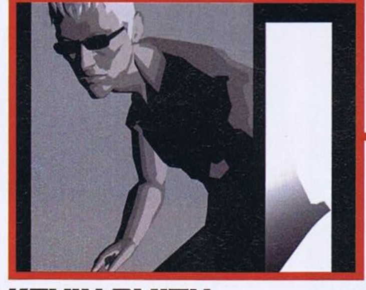
HARMAN SMITH

Killer 7 gets its name from Harman' seven deadly personalities. These are beginning to awaken in him – and he has the power to make them real. You can access these by turning on Harman's TV set. Really.

FAMILY TIES

You actually begin the game as Garcian Smith – it's his psychic powers that can unlock the personalities in Harman. The story goes that Harman and the seven Smiths met in the Union Hotel in Philadelphia in 1952 and made a pact. Which doesn't make a scrap of sense to us, because if they're all part of Harman, how could he meet them and... oh wait. This is a videogame. Nothing has to make sense.

You can change your personality at specific points in the game – who you choose is entirely up to you. Given the differing special powers of the seven Smiths, and the odd puzzle that needs solving, we're sure some will be more suitable for certain objectives than others. Here's a who's who of Smithdom...



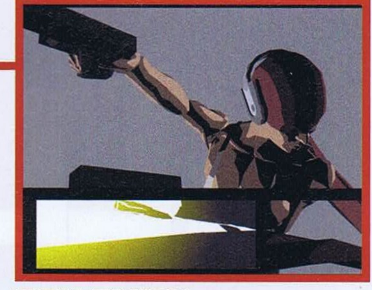
KEVIN SMITH

An albino assassin with a penchant for throwing knives, he's one of the most mysterious of the Smiths. No-one's quite sure of his ability yet, but he seems to like crouching. Maybe he has bad knees.



GARCIAN SMITH

The leader of the seven. While he's in need of a humour bypass, he'd do anything for Harman. He uses a silenced pistol and his special 'telegnosis' ability to hunt down the optically camouflaged Heaven Smiles.



CON SMITH

Assassin number five is a blind boy with enhanced hearing that lets him 'visualize' sounds. He's a dead fast runner with fast firing dual automatics. But when he's asleep 'he's just an average child'. Oh.



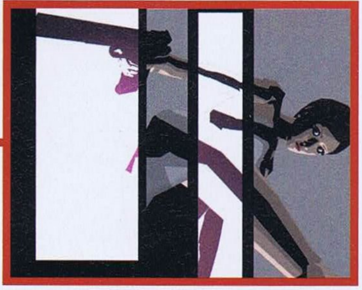
DAN SMITH

Dan's a trained killer with super human powers and a modified Colt Python. He feels no remorse and wouldn't think twice about taking out Harman himself. The only other he trusts is Garcian.



MASK DE SMITH

Personality three is a kind-hearted former wrestler. Armed with double grenade launchers (firing normal, electric and gravity grenades) and 'British Lancashire' wrassling moves, we like him.

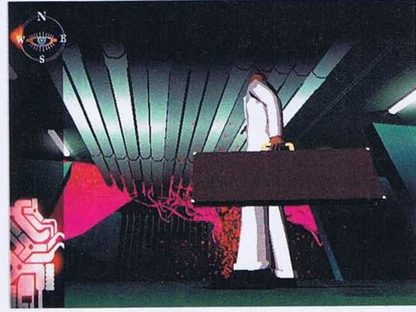


KAEDE SMITH

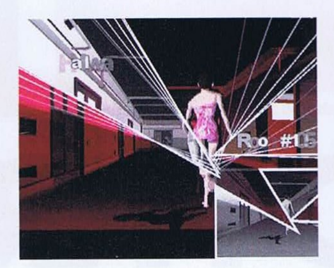
The fourth assassin's white dress 'spells death'. She can summon her deadly spirits by gushing out a shower of blood from her wrist. She keeps her distance from the others. She's not wife material.


△ Kaede's Blood Shower in full grisly drizzly effect. She can call on this foul rain to clear invisible barriers in the game. Capcom tell us that what's beyond an invisible barrier 'remains to be seen'. Unless it's invisible, right?


△ You wouldn't want to share a drink with Dan. He'd kick your face off as soon as look at you.


△ Garcian's a 'cleaner'. If a personality dies he can bring them back by recovering their body.

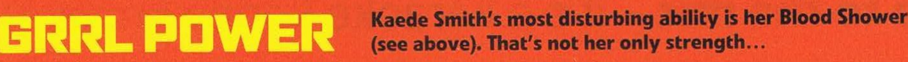








△ Con's the only Smith with two guns and eyes that are broken. He's still a cracking shot.

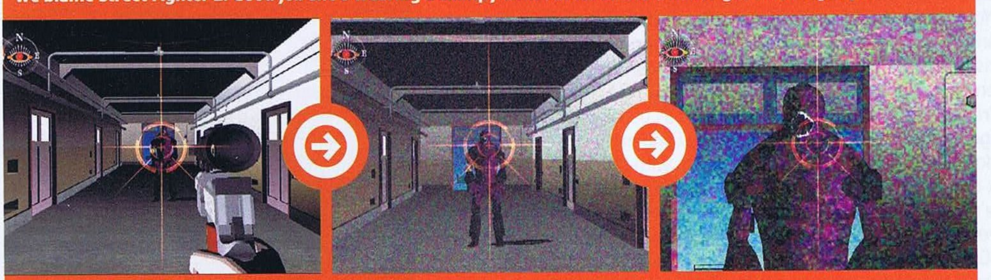


GRRL POWER

Kaede Smith's most disturbing ability is her Blood Shower (see above). That's not her only strength...



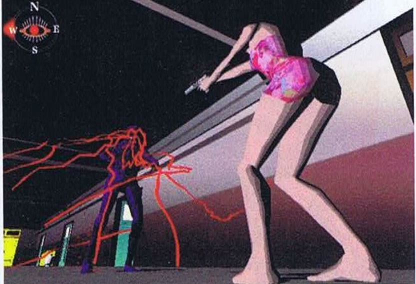
KNEES ARE GOOD Kaede's a bit of a moody, distant young thing – and up close she lets her knees and feet do the talking. "She knows how to use them legs!" say Capcom, in a rather surprising turn of West Country speak. It's videogame tradition that girls have arms like twigs and legs like whirring blades of lady flesh – we blame *Street Fighter 2*. Good job she's wearing a skimpy white dress or she'd never get those legs up...



HARDBALLER The 'Baller's Kaede's best weapon. She specialises in long-range shooting, so she's equipped with the gun that does the sniper thing most effectively in the game. As well as an oversized custom-made scope, it also packs a two-step zoom function, as you can see above (er, illustrated in three screenshots...) which ensures deadly accuracy every time. Unless she's being controlled by Marcus, when she suddenly becomes a doofus.

NGC VERDICT



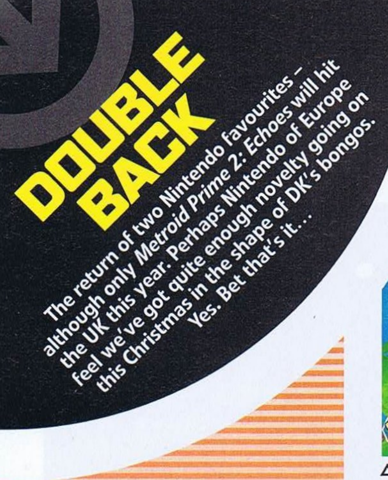


One of the most unpredictable of new games, this. While its moody visuals and OTT comicbook violence have a stunning impact, you do find yourself wondering where the game is in all this. What do you *do* exactly? How does it all hang together? How much glum storytelling is there to wade through? It's got our curiosity – and it won't let go...

ANTICIPATION RATING







△ Mario's in fourth place. We suggest dumping the fleabag ape in the drink…



△ A voice-controlled game, where one player calls out the numbers of doom?



△ "Launch! Launch! Launch!" Shouting – quicker than pressing A? We'll see…



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **Over 75 new minigames, including Mowtown, Catch You Letter, Astaroad Rage and Cashapult.**
- **Six new game boards.**
- **Characters include Mario, Luigi, Peach, Yoshi, Daisy, Wario, Waluigi, Boo, Koopa Kid, Bowser, Donkey Kong and Toad.**
- **Movement around the board speeded up – now less time between turns and minigames.**
- **Each copy comes with a Nintendo Gamecube Mic.**



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Hudson

What have they done before?
Parties 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 (MP5 – NGC/89, 80%)
Much improved sequel to *Mario Party 4's* poor showing. A bit slow at times, though.







△ Bored yet? The chance to speed around the boards should keep things interesting.

MARIO PARTY 6

Step up to the mic – it's a karaoke koopa knees-up.



Back when *Donkey Konga* first arrived in the **NGC** office, we were surrounded by journalists from magazines dedicated to 'rival' game consoles, eager to prod and pat our collection of bongos. You'd think they'd never seen someone clasping a set of plastic drums between their knees before. When we get hold of *Mario Party 6*, we're confident we can pull an even bigger crowd, thanks to the 'Nintendo Gamecube Mic' that we can bark orders into.

> **"WE CAN PULL AN EVEN BIGGER CROWD THANKS TO THE MIC WE CAN BARK INTO"**

Yes, there's the familiar Party mode, where you go head-to-head against the Gamecube or real friends across a series of game boards (there are six this time round), competing in minigames in a race for coins and stars. But there's now a Mic mode, where you get to take part in a game show, answering questions into the microphone. You'll also be able to use the mic during the minigames (we're guessing it'll be a selection, rather than the full 75+). Imagine the player with the mic launching Bullet Bill or a series of missiles and the other three trying to avoid being blown into tiny cartoon pieces. That kind of thing.

Other than that, it's pretty much business as usual – apart from a new day and night system. It's all tied in with the single-player Story mode, where Brighton (the sun) and Twila (the moon) fall out or something, and it's up to Mario and co to restore the balance. By playing minigames. Mmm. These, and the boards, change depending on the time of day, while new characters also make an appearance. Wonder who..?







We know of a man who's mad for *Mario Party*. So mad in fact, that it's the *only* thing he plays on Gamecube. Fact. The opportunity to shout at Yoshi in *Mario Party 6* might just send him over the edge. The voice command control's certainly promising – and last year's game was a hit without it. How fresh will *MP6 really* feel though? We'll let you know…

ANTICIPATION RATING








△ The Luminoth – they don't like it up 'em.



△ Watch out for the Death Ball in multiplayer.

△ Kittsy wants a water cannon. D'you hear, Retro?



△ Portals – your doorway between light and dark.

METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

It's only a month until Nintendo roll out Samus…



Geraint finished the first *Metroid Prime* twice and he still rates it as the best game of last year. Naturally, he's got some serious expectations for its sequel and bores us on a regular basis about how many days there are to go till we get final review code and how it's 'going to rule' and how… it's generally around this point that we switch off.

He's probably right though. While some of us are a bit uninspired by the look of *Echoes* and show a little concern about the superficial nature of the multiplayer matches (from what we've played so far) and worry (pointlessly) that the media spotlight's going to be concentrating on the likes of *Halo 2* and *Half-Life 2* this Christmas, ultimately none of it really matters. Because seeing Geraint's face light up when he switches this game on just makes us want to cry our bodies dry.

While it's not doing anything vastly different from its predecessor, the improvements – new arm cannons, new visors, better lighting effects, speedier scanning – should be enough for Metroid fans to devote so much time all over again. Until next issue's review, some new shots…



△ The time it takes to nail *Echoes* should be on a par with *MP1*.



△ This game sees the debut of Morph Ball boss battles. Nerk!





There are some cynics in this world who think *Echoes* looks exactly the same as the first game. At first glance… they might have a point. But there has only been a year or so between the games. Call it *Metroid 1.5* if you like, it still manages to make its predecessor seem older, somehow. And we just can't get enough of the *'troid*…

ANTICIPATION RATING





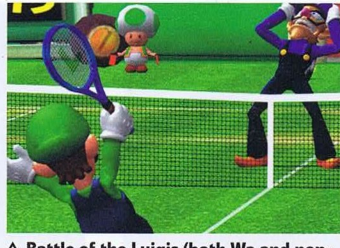


PERFECT PARTNERS?

Everyone needs balance in their life. Which is why we think the grimness of *Call of Duty*, followed by the big ball thrills of *Mario Power Tennis* would be a good mix for an evening's entertainment. You could end up being more disturbed by the latter though...



△ A single button tap, and Wario's signature move appears.



△ Battle of the Luigis (both Wa and non-Wa). Evil's defeated yet again...



△ Waluigi's 'cheat' defence move? He can flood the court and swim to the ball.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Characters include Mario, Luigi, Wario, Waluigi, Donkey Kong, Bowser, Peach, Yoshi, Shy Guy, Koopa Troopa and other Mushroom Kingdom special guests...
- One- to four-player modes.
- Win tournaments to unlock extra characters, courts and challenges.
- Build up skill points to charge up character-specific specials.





MARIO POWER TENNIS

Rain won't stop play – but the bananas might...

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Camelot

What have they done before?
Mario Tennis (N64) (N64/49, 91%)
One of the most enjoyable experiences on N64.



Overnight, Nintendo have changed the name of *Mario Tennis* – adding a *'Power'* to make it sound meatier – a bit more *manly*. There's more of an emphasis on powerful shots this time round, with beefier players such as Bowser and DK able to smash Megaton Balls ('insanely powerful', by all accounts) and even the more delicate Shy Guy able to crack out a Tornado Return.

So we suppose it's fair enough. No?

Careful choice of doubles partnerships will be key to a good time, though. Get the balance right between defensive (aka dull) players like Luigi and quick, evil-hitting attackers such as Wario, and you should be on track for some memorable victories.

The fantasy courts will certainly stick in your mind. The one set just outside Luigi's Mansion, for instance – ghosts gradually appear and scare the players stiff (literally) while banana skins fall from the sky. Tiger Tim wouldn't stand a chance with all that rotting fruit.

> **"TIGER TIM JUST WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE WITH ALL THAT ROTTING FRUIT"**

To relieve possible irritation caused by the court hazards, each character has a unique special power shot – and a defensive super move. Fed up of being outplayed? Simply unleash Mario's hammer.

As you read this, the game's just been released in Japan – and we'll be getting out correspondents to ship copies over, ready for our review next issue. In the meantime, sink your eyes into these great new screens...

NGC VERDICT

UK	US	JAPAN
2005	8TH NOV	OUT NOW



As usual, Camelot have turned this around quickly – for Japan and the US, at least. As it's based on the N64 version's physics and control system, they shouldn't put a foot wrong. We just hope there's been enough time set aside for fine-tuning (ie putting in an option that allows you to switch off the gameplay-interrupting cut-scenes).

ANTICIPATION RATING

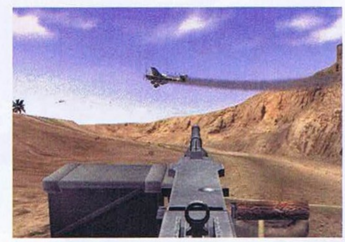






△ Got a decent surround sound system? This game will give it a work out.


△ Bored of the protection of a tank? Pop out the top with a machine-gun.


△ You'll get to experience over 30 different WWII weapons. This is big.


△ As this is an FPS, you can carry a crazy amount of weapons.



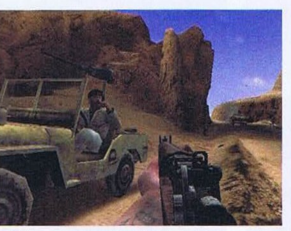
CALL OF DUTY FINEST HOUR

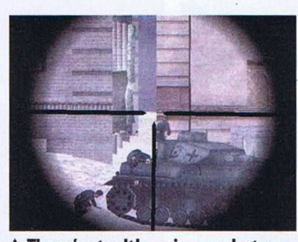
America, Russia and Mother England – attack!


With a development team peppered with guys from the *Medal of Honor* troop, you'd expect the first console entry in the *Call of Duty* series to be a cinematic, polished and stressful experience. Your expectations are likely to remain crush-free.

Finest Hour batters your eyes with some of the key events of WWII – all delivered in glorious Gamecube-o-vision. The twist is that you'll get to play through events from six different perspectives, fighting as two soldiers from each of the British, American and Russian forces. One minute you're a Brit commando in North Africa, the next you're a Russian recruit in Stalingrad. You'll also get to enter the brain of a Yank tank commander taking on the Nazis in Belgium.

The tank combat looks like it'll take up a third of the game – and you won't be tackling the enemy on your own. It's a squad-based first-person shooter, with AI routines in place which promise that your fellow soldiers assist you to help you reach your goal – laying down surpressing fire, attacking planes in their own tanks while you surge ahead, that kind of thing. We like what we've seen so far...


△ Nice tattoo. All British troops in North Africa had them. T'was law.


△ There's stealth, sniper, sabotage and full-on battlefield missions.





Atmosphere's comparitively easy to create – *Finest Hour* comes armed with ear-bursting explosions, bullet screams, shouting infantrymen and rumbling tanks. It's immersive, we give you that – but so is *Finding Nemo*. No, it's the AI where this'll rise or fall – you can't tell troops what to do, so they'd better behave realistically. Or else.

ANTICIPATION RATING







HOT NEW GAMES

Updatin… on the …mes of the future.

WARIO WARE 2

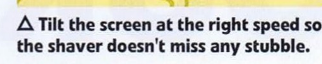
Spin on this, minigame fans!

It's impossible not to love Wario's GBA and Gamecube outings, and the bods at Nintendo know exactly how brilliant their minigame format is. Hence the forthcoming DS outing and this recently released GBA sequel, which we'll be reviewing on Japanese import next month.

The gimmick here is a motion sensor built into the oversized cart. The games are controlled by tilting the GBA from side to side, or spinning it around in your hands – typical tasks involve dragging a shaver over a man's stubble, and balancing a cat on a barrel. In Japan the game is called *Mawaru*, meaning 'rotate'.

Anyone who played the fantastic *Koro Koro Kirby*, a motion-sensing roll-'em-up for GBC, will know that the tilty gubbins inside the cart has to be calibrated before you play. In this case, the cart does a quick reset before each minigame, so it stays accurate even when you're passing the GBA between several players.

An old-style GBA seems to be the best format to use, simply because it's easier to spin it and there's no sticky-out screen to catch your fingers on, but an SP works well too. The game warns you to take a break if your hands get dizzy, so you don't risk dropping the GBA. We reckon playing it in bed is safest. It's the most insane Wario game to date.

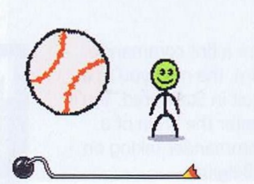


△ Tilt the screen at the right speed so the shaver doesn't miss any stubble.

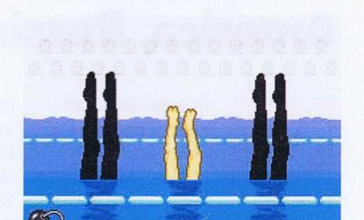
△ The GBA's ability to rotate graphics is what makes this game possible.



△ If only doing the dishes really took three seconds and was lots of fun.



△ Don't drop the ball? Don't drop your GBA while playing this game either.



△ The rubbishest Olympic sport turns into a nifty GBA balancing act.

YOSHI'S UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION

The lean green spinning machine… coming soon to GBA



Not content with letting Wario hog all the velocity-sensing headlines, Yoshi will be soon be getting a piece of the action courtesy of the same motion chip built into the *Mawaru/Wario Ware 2* cartridge.

This platform-puzzle-adventure is controlled by tilting the GBA to make Yoshi's picture-book world rotate around him. For example, if you see some coins floating overhead, rather than jump to collect them, you turn the GBA until gravity makes our cold-blooded green hero fall down into them.

Yoshi also does a few transformations, turning into a balloon or helicopter to fly through various bonus stages. It's out in Japan this December.

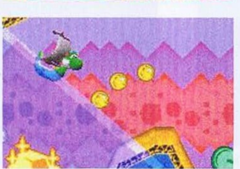














△ The reason it has this unusual visual style is because Yoshi's island home has been turned into a picture book. Again?

GRAND THEFT AUTO ADVANCE

Don't play this on your girly pink GBA…



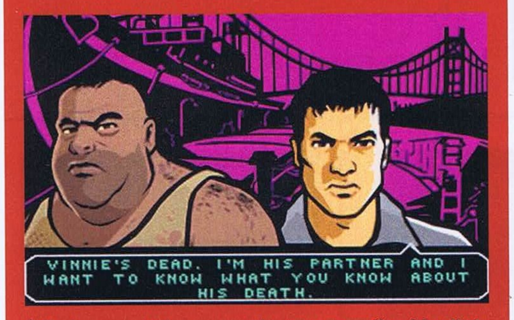
▲ That was a post office queue on pension day, before we blew it up.

Yet another one that will be out in the shops before we're able to warn you in a review. Normally that spells T-U-R-K-E-Y, but having spoken to some people from the world of PlayStation, this is, apparently, standard practice for a *GTA* game.

We've had a fiddle with what was almost certainly a finished version of it, and came away reasonably satisfied that we're not going to suffer a repeat of the horrors of the GBC version. It's presented like the original PC versions, with an overhead view that zooms out (but not very much) when you're driving fast. The art style, characters and mission setup are taken from the PS2 sequels, and the scale of the city where you live out your criminal dreams is at least on a par with *Vice City*.

Missions are gathered by visiting telephone boxes or special areas where villains hang out, and you can have several on the go at once. That way you can always try something else if you find a mission that's too hard/rubbish.

GTA ADVANCE



▲ Basic presentation means the screen scrolls with a little bit of speed. It's still not exactly smooth, all the same.

Having shifted a ridiculous number of copies on PS2, the GTA name is one of the most recognisable brands in console gaming. Sticking it on something sub-standard might spoil some of the widespread goodwill, so you'd expect the GBA version to be at least as good as the original PC games. But we're not yet 100% convinced. Perhaps it's because of the limitations of the hardware it's running on, but while *GTA Advance* isn't anywhere near as jerky as *Payback*, it's far from smooth. The core gameplay seems to be all there, so it's probably a question of getting used to visuals that are far from exciting.

VS

PAYBACK



▲ It definitely looks the part. The overhead 3D view means you can inspect buildings from all angles.

At first glance, this is exactly what most fans would have wanted *GTA* to look like. The buildings, cars and roadside objects are all 3D, and the overall quality of the graphics is almost like a very early PlayStation game. Until you see it move. Honestly, you'd get a smoother visual experience by printing a series of screens on postcards and throwing them in the air in front of your face. The only way they could have made this game any jerkier is by making the GBA reset itself ten times per second. The cars look like bricks too. It's so messy, it's practically unplayable.

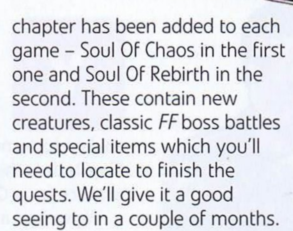
FINAL FANTASY I & II DAWN OF SOULS

RPG classics reborn and rereleased.



The *Final Fantasy* series is the most revered of all RPG franchises, but with half of the games appearing on now-defunct hardware, how are you supposed to experience the early days of the *FF* saga?

Luckily, Square-Enix are in the never-ending process of updating the NES instalments, and in December we'll be getting the first two games on a single GBA cartridge. This one is actually an enhanced version of *FF Origins* for PlayStation. It looks much the same but a brand-new chapter has been added to each game – Soul Of Chaos in the first one and Soul Of Rebirth in the second. These contain new creatures, classic *FF* boss battles and special items which you'll need to locate to finish the quests. We'll give it a good seeing to in a couple of months.

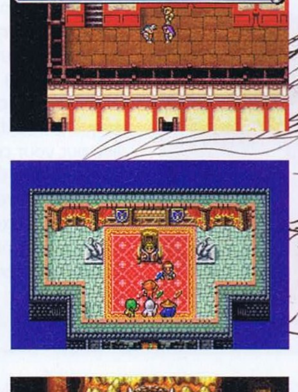


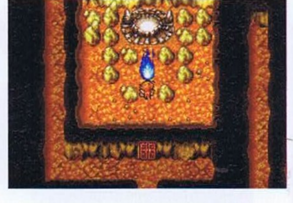






△ Here's the bit where numbers float out of an enemy monster's head.









△ Build your own courses and race your mates on your home turf.

F-ZERO CLIMAX

It took seven years for the original *F-Zero* to get its first sequel. These days you can't browse the GBA shelves at your local games shop without bumping into yet another version of the classic future racer. Well, there have been two so far. In the third one there's a new spin boost attack move and a complete track editor, so you can make your own sequel before Nintendo does.



△ You couldn't do this on the NES but you could with a slate and chalk.

ALIEN HOMINID

Still no word on a UK release date for this resolutely old-school 2D platform shooter from independent developer The Behemoth, but here's a look at the custom PDA mode, where you can play a simple puzzle version of the main game with up to four players – there are 200 levels built in, or you can make your own using some simple drawing tools. See how retro it is!



△ Off to meet Santa Claus and Tom Hanks. Who says games are for kids?

THE POLAR EXPRESS

Based on an animated movie that's based on a book of the same name, this adventure from THQ will take you from…from…

…Sorry, we dozed off there. How embarrassing. Ah yes…

…about a young boy going on a train journey to the North Pole to meet Santa, who is Tom Hanks. Inspiring and extraordinary, they claim. Who are we to argue?



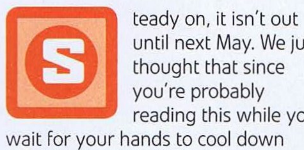
△ Entering the twilight zone of games that almost got released, then didn't.

KIEN

We're sure we've seen this one before. In fact there's such a strong déjà vu factor here, at least one person in the office insists he remembers reviewing it. But a quick check through the archives reveals he is wrong and a fool. This side-scrolling RPG failed to make it to the shops a couple of years back, and has resurfaced in search of a publisher. We'll keep you posted.

JUNGLE BEAT

Bongos and bandages…



Steady on, it isn't out until next May. We just thought that since you're probably reading this while you wait for your hands to cool down from an intense *Donkey Konga* session, we'd take this opportunity to ramble a little about Nintendo's mighty fine alternative use for those bongo controllers.

Jungle Beat gives you complete control over a platform game using only the thumpy-clappy sensors within those plastic drums. Batter the right-hand side to make the Kong scamper along the screen, and hit the left one to make him jump. Clapping or hitting both bongos together also performs actions such as collecting bananas and making plants grow into temporary platforms.

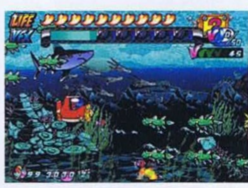
It takes a little getting used to but once you're up and running it works very well. The only problem is the pain you'll feel at the end of a level, when your handbones feel all arthritic from bongoing. But by May, *Donkey Konga* will have have worn your fists down to fleshy nubbins anyway.





VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

Cool and he thinks it, but our hero doesn't know Thing One about rules.





Δ A pink-themed riot on Jap import from mid-November.



He might be a tubby ginger Yank with a penchant for skin-tight pink perving suits, but girls are still interested in lucky old Joe. Well, one girl. Tired of being rescued from silver screen supervillains, Joe's missus, Sylvia, steps to centre stage as a playable character in this eagerly awaited platform sequel. Not only has Joe brought along his girlfriend to protect him from all those scary bad guys, he's also been busy learning new hero techniques. Now he's able to replay successful attacks, thereby causing triple damage. While this might be considered cheating in gentlemanly circles, Joe couldn't give a fig as long as it helps clear a path between him and his next cheeseburger.

Sylvia is even worse. Rather than simply beat people up in slow motion, she whips out a gun and shoots them in the face. Spidey, Supesy and all the other old-school heroes would never approve of all this. It's nothing more than the caddish behaviour of a super-lout and his pram-faced council estate lady friend. But what's important here is even if Joe can't follow the rules, he knows how to star in storming good games.

THE INCREDIBLES

All its friends are brown & red.

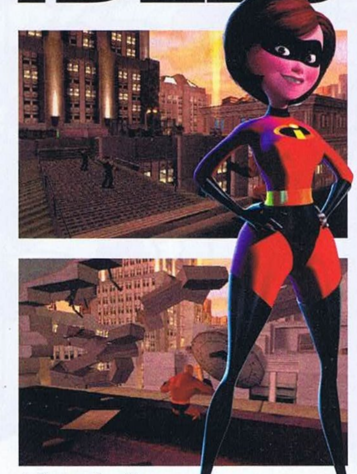


You know how games and films often evoke specific colours? No? How about *The Matrix* – it's greenish blue, right? Or *Avalon*? It's sepia. *Mario Sunshine* – sky blue. As for *The Incredibles*, the new Pixar movie and THQ game of the same name, we'd have to say it's brown. With a little bit of red splashed around the place. Mostly brown, though, which is also the colour of *Quake*.

Anyway, we digress. This game is a multi-stranded adventure featuring jumping, fighting and shooting. It stars a family of heroes, a bit like the Fantastic Four except there are five of them. You can pick stuff up and chuck it around using Mr Incredible, the daddy of the gang, or perform athletically whippy martial arts moves with the pleasingly flexible Elastigirl. There's also a kid called Dash, who's extremely fast.

The game is aimed at a slightly older audience than the typical movie license, although we must admit that when we saw it, it brought back memories of *Batman Vengeance*. The graphics are quite nice though.

It's released on November 5th, but we aren't allowed to review it until next month. Hmmm…



Δ Out on bonfire night, this one.

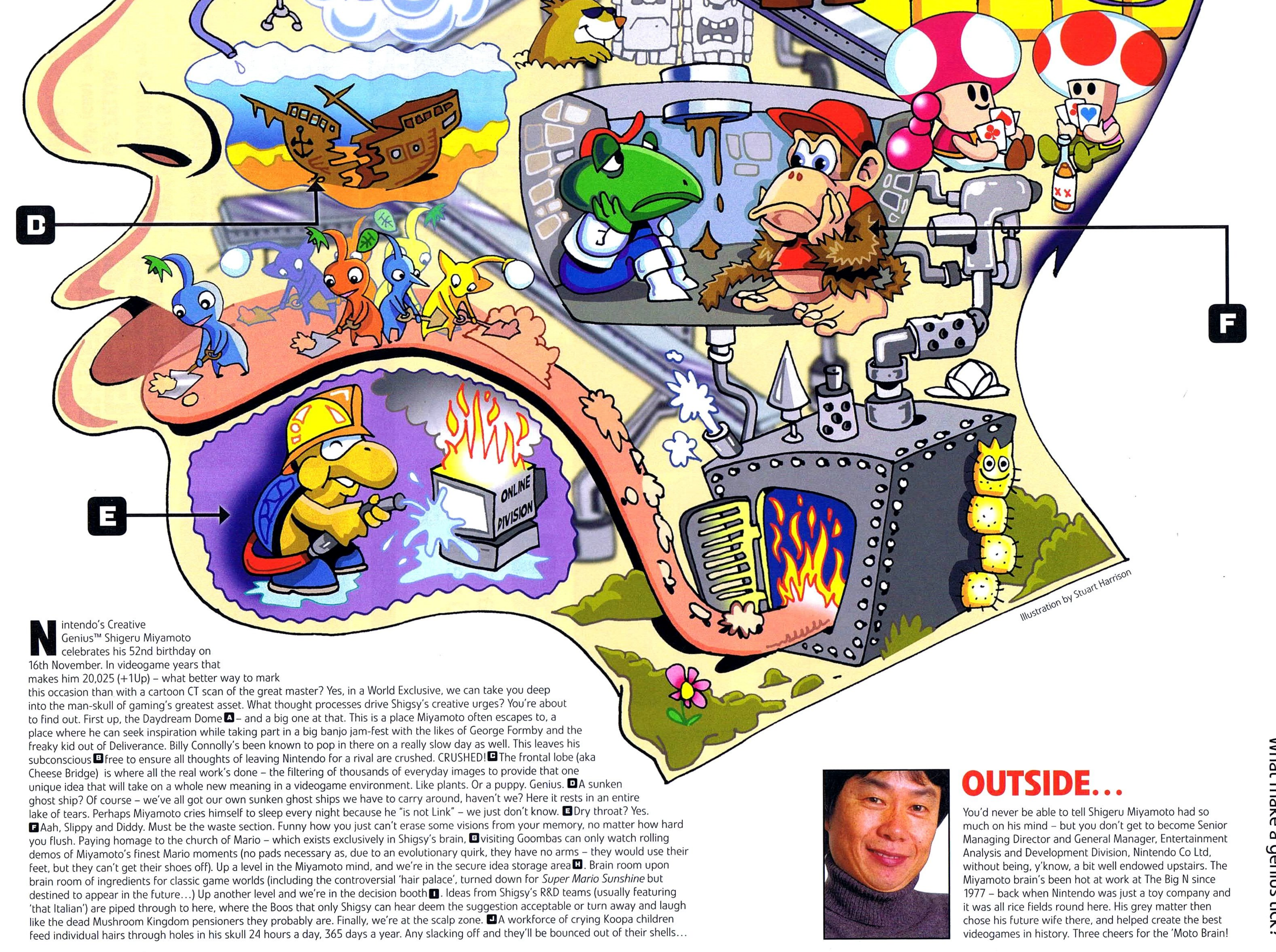
HOW IT WORKS...

"Deep into the man-skull of gaming's greatest asset"



MIYAMOTO'S BRAIN

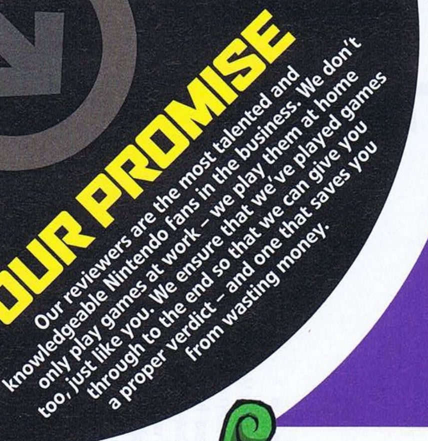
What make a genius tick?



Nintendo's Creative Genius™ Shigeru Miyamoto celebrates his 52nd birthday on 16th November. In videogame years that makes him 20,025 (+1Up) – what better way to mark this occasion than with a cartoon CT scan of the great master? Yes, in a World Exclusive, we can take you deep into the man-skull of gaming's greatest asset. What thought processes drive Shigsy's creative urges? You're about to find out. First up, the Daydream Dome **A** – and a big one at that. This is a place Miyamoto often escapes to, a place where he can seek inspiration while taking part in a big banjo jam-fest with the likes of George Formby and the freaky kid out of Deliverance. Billy Connolly's been known to pop in there on a really slow day as well. This leaves his subconscious **B** free to ensure all thoughts of leaving Nintendo for a rival are crushed. CRUSHED! **C** The frontal lobe (aka Cheese Bridge) is where all the real work's done – the filtering of thousands of everyday images to provide that one unique idea that will take on a whole new meaning in a videogame environment. Like plants. Or a puppy. Genius. **D** A sunken ghost ship? Of course – we've all got our own sunken ghost ships we have to carry around, haven't we? Here it rests in an entire lake of tears. Perhaps Miyamoto cries himself to sleep every night because he "is not Link" – we just don't know. **E** Dry throat? Yes. **F** Aah, Slippy and Diddy. Must be the waste section. Funny how you just can't erase some visions from your memory, no matter how hard you flush. Paying homage to the church of Mario – which exists exclusively in Shigsy's brain, **G** visiting Goombas can only watch rolling demos of Miyamoto's finest Mario moments (no pads necessary as, due to an evolutionary quirk, they have no arms – they would use their feet, but they can't get their shoes off). Up a level in the Miyamoto mind, and we're in the secure idea storage area **H**. Brain room upon brain room of ingredients for classic game worlds (including the controversial 'hair palace', turned down for *Super Mario Sunshine* but destined to appear in the future…) Up another level and we're in the decision booth **I**. Ideas from Shigsy's R&D teams (usually featuring 'that Italian') are piped through to here, where the Boos that only Shigsy can hear deem the suggestion acceptable or turn away and laugh like the dead Mushroom Kingdom pensioners they probably are. Finally, we're at the scalp zone. **J** A workforce of crying Koopa children feed individual hairs through holes in his skull 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Any slacking off and they'll be bounced out of their shells…

OUTSIDE…

You'd never be able to tell Shigeru Miyamoto had so much on his mind – but you don't get to become Senior Managing Director and General Manager, Entertainment Analysis and Development Division, Nintendo Co Ltd, without being, y'know, a bit well endowed upstairs. The Miyamoto brain's been hot at work at The Big N since 1977 – back when Nintendo was just a toy company and it was all rice fields round here. His grey matter then chose his future wife there, and helped create the best videogames in history. Three cheers for the 'Moto Brain!

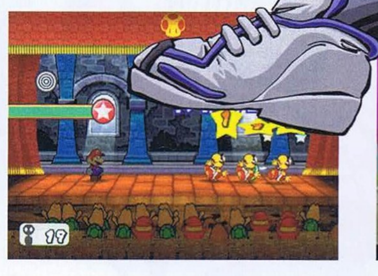


NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS









PAPER MARIO 2

You'll have reams of laughs and ripping good fun with the translated version of Mazza's flat-out adventure. P48





MEGA MAN X COMMAND MISSION

Bows and arrows and twee villages not floating your boat? Go futuristic. Even Mega Man's keen to be involved in our RPG special. P62



LORD OF THE RINGS THE THIRD AGE

Prepare for some orc slaying. In fact, prepare for some orc slaying, uruk-punching, cave troll trouncing and balrog mashing. It's battlicious. P58



TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 2 BUSH RESCUE

The US President gets lost in the outback – only one marsupial can save him. Of course. P68

AND...

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Yep, first review of EA's brand new modded racer which boasts a margarine-smooth frame-rate – or so we thought…

P66



X-MEN LEGENDS

Who says Wolverine's not a team player? He is now. And he's on *your* team.

P54

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this game is crud.

25-49
A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.



THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you…

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some quick plus and minus points.



- Bright and colourful.
- Festive.
- Erm…

–

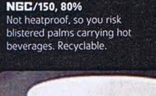
- Cheap and tatty.
- Embarrassing to be seen in.
- Not waterproof.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

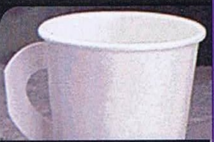
Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suitable suggestions here.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...



Paper Cup
Drinkware
NGC/150, 80%
Not heatproof, so you risk blistered palms carrying hot beverages. Recyclable.



VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Gamecube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? This is where you'll find out for sure…

3 VISUALS
Paper Hats look good on nobody. Not even Scarlett Johansson.

1 SOUNDS
They rustle. The only pleasing sound is the 'pop' of the cracker.

6 MASTERY
After a few sweet sherries, it seems like a *brilliant* idea…

2 LIFESPAN
If you don't rip them, they'll slide off your head anyway.

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

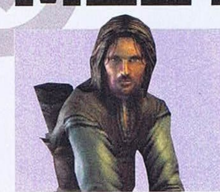
VERDICT
You have to have *Paper Hats* in crackers, but we can't explain exactly why. Because they're cheap?



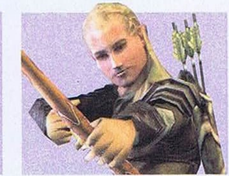
23

MEET THE NGC TEAM

So, if they were Lord of the Rings characters, who'd be what?



MARCUS
Aragorn. He soldiers on, aided by a rag-tag bunch of bumpkins, determined to destroy evil. Or meet print deadline, at least.



PAUL
An elf. Has to be, with that hair. When he's not tinkering with his cart, he loafs about in trees strumming his harp.



KITTSY
We only have a picture of one of Kittsy's minions. He sends them out to dish out the violence he's too busy to administer himself.




GERAINT
That boyish face, the eternal optimism, the stinking, swollen feet. He's a pipe-smoking hobbit from the Cardiff Shire.

MIM
Creeping out of the dark burbling nonsense, it's Gollum! Oh no, it's Mim. Easy mistake, but Gollum has a sense of humour.



RICHARD
Rich helped Paul in the design department this month. We found him down the mines meaded out of his brain…







PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS
RELEASE DATE	12TH NOV
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	17
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



NGC STAR GAME

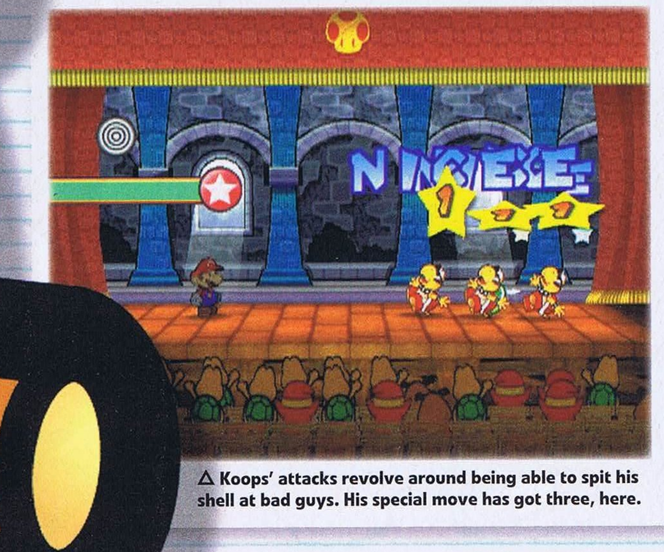
Forget a sequel to Super Mario 64. We've got this gem.



Nintendo, as we all know, can be infuriating. Their attitude towards the European market has long been *interesting*, as *Animal Crossing's* years-late appearance has demonstrated. And although Gamecube is an unqualified triumph, it still suffers from a lack of first-party titles, and let's face it, long gone are the days when a killer Ninty title could hold onto the top of the charts for any amount of time, especially in this age of *Grand Theft Auto*.

But you know what? None of that matters. And the reason for this is that *Nintendo make the games they want to make*, seemingly regardless of trends, fashions or cash-hoovering free-roaming crime sims. They follow a wilful star of their own, and for those of us who know exactly why Zelda and Mario remain the very best experiences videogaming can offer, that's the bottom line. Nobody else is capable of making *Wind Waker* or *Sunshine* or even wacky touch-screen handhelds, and for that reason alone we can forgive Nintendo almost anything. Who cares that the majority of Gamecube's top-tier games are sequels (*Metroid Prime* aside)? Not us. Because *Paper Mario 2* is yet another sequel but is so fresh, charming and downright *fun* that any other concerns melt away in the cynicism-stripping glare of its primary-coloured headlights.

Yes, it looks like a children's game, but that simply ensures it can reach the young as well as the old,



△ Koops' attacks revolve around being able to spit his shell at bad guys. His special move has got three, here.



"Continuing a self-mocking tradition"

TISSUE OF TOURS

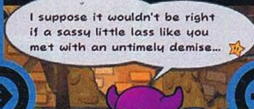
Welcome to the world of Paper Mario…

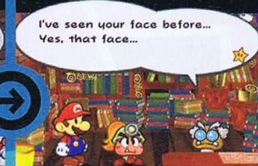


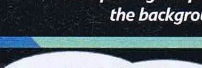
ROGUEPORT

This is where your quest starts. It's a hive of scum and villainy, dominated by a gallows and sporting Delfino mobsters who like to rough up unsuspecting Koopas in the background.













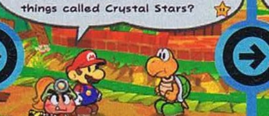


PETALBURG

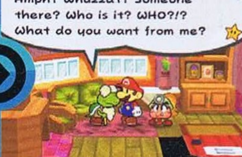
A swathe of greenery that is home to a delightful little village, populated by a decidedly oddball selection of characters, all living in fear of the dragon Hooktail, who's a nasty piece of work.











You got a POW Block!

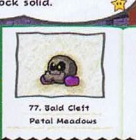
Attacks all ground-bound enemies.

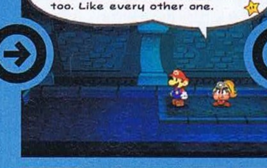


SHHWONK FORTRESS

A grim and forbidding place, you'll need to penetrate the fortress's catacombs to liberate the Sun and Moon stones. You'll find some very annoying monsters here.





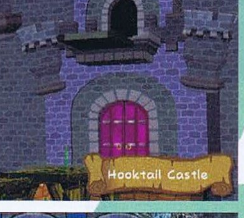




CASTLE HOOKTAIL

The home of your first proper 'boss'. The Castle has lots of puzzles that use your sidekick Koops' special abilities (hint: he can shoot his shell). Hooktail himself is no pushover.









△ There are loads of things to find.



△ Hmm. A dastardly trap and no mistake.



△ This disturbing mouse fancies Mario.



△ It takes a special badge to win this fight.





and frankly we can think of nothing better than parents playing this with their kids. There are many reasons to love *Paper Mario 2*, but, as with *Animal Crossing*, this is a game that can be enjoyed across generations. That's primarily because it's very funny, continuing a self-mocking tradition established in *Super Mario RPG* on the SNES and carried on by *Paper Mario* (N64) and *Superstar Saga* (GBA). The humour is couched in simple language and slapstick, but there's subtlety in between the Americanisms, from the Delfino mafia goons roughing up Rogueport civilians in the



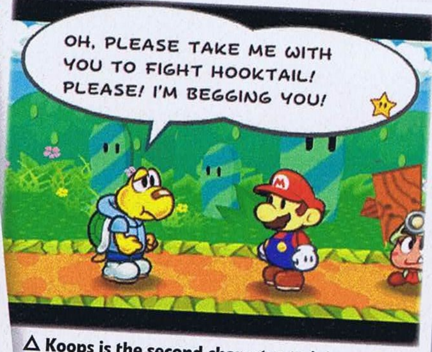
PAPER MARIO 2
He's such a card…

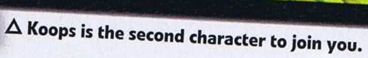
PLAY TO THEM

Fighting in Paper Mario is a little unusual. Here's how it works.



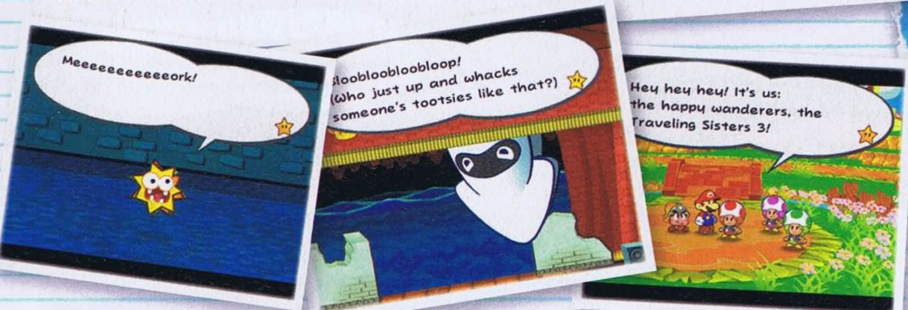
△ That's a lot of Toads. What can the occasion be?




△ Koops is the second character to join you.



△ Professor Frankly might look drug-crazed but he's a sweet old gimmer, really. Very helpful, too.



background to the X-naut computer asking in its best Shatner-speak, "what is thing you call… love?" You're going to love it.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. This isn't your usual Mario game. There's some platforming involved but this is in no way a run-and-jump extravaganza in the mould of *Super Mario 64* or *Sunshine*. If you were lucky enough to play the original *Paper Mario* on N64 then you'll know what to expect: an RPG, but one heavily disguised with the trappings of what you'd expect from a Mario game.

Just like 'proper' RPGs, this sports a turn-based fighting system coupled with piles of statistics and special abilities, but not once is anything baffling or over-complex.

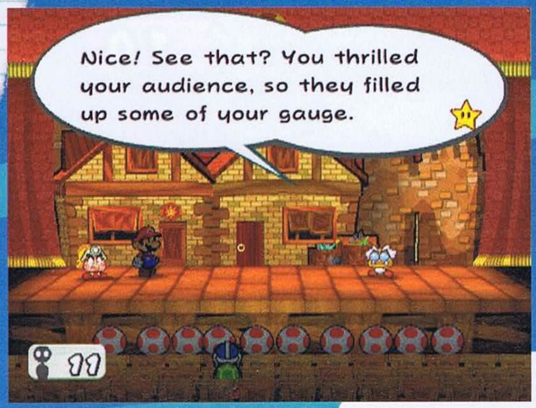


SPECIAL MOVES

For each Crystal Star you find you'll get a special power. The first is a treat to use if you're in the middle of a fight and low on health; it causes power-ups to fall from the sky that you have to hit using an aiming mechanism you might recognise from Yoshi's Island on the SNES and GBA. Great fun and almost a mini-game in itself.

Paper Mario 2 can be a thing of remarkable depth, but Nintendo are clever enough not to let that drown the experience of actually playing the game, and while there's plenty of stat-management if you want it, it takes second seat to the absurd, engrossing sights and sounds on offer.

The fighting system itself is a refinement of what was seen in GBA's *Superstar Saga*, which is to say that it's a mixture of turn-based and real-time fighting. Attacks and targets are selected in time-honoured fashion, but 'action commands' add the quick reflexes. The simplest example of this is hitting A at the exact moment Mario jumps on an enemy's head – doing so causes extra damage. This system

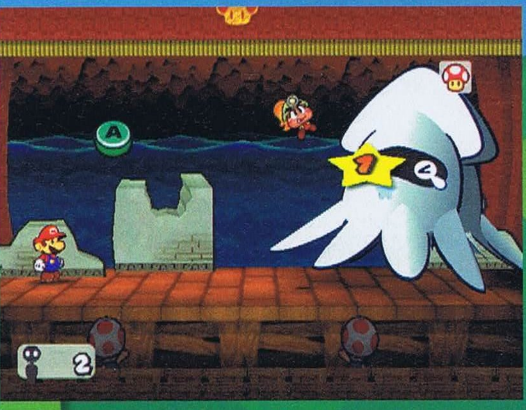


It's all about the audience. Well, and nobbling the enemy. But the more you please the crowd, the more Star Power you receive, which in turn lets you use some special skills.


Meet certain criteria when battling and you'll be treated to a roulette wheel-style affair; match the icons up and you'll receive a power-up for your trouble. Very handy in a fight.



Not all the audience are friendly; some of them will throw objects on stage, such as hammers. Painful. But you can always leap in to the crowd to prevent such antics, which is nice.


It's essential to keep fights exciting by using special moves and consistently doing high damage. Exciting fights will draw more punters, increasing the Star Power you can reap.

ON THE PRESS

The page furniture you can expect to see...

STATTO!

Paper Mario is a proper RPG in disguise. Mario has all sorts of stats that you can increase by going up in level. And to do that, you have to collect the stars that are awarded for successfully winning fights.

PARTY DOWN

You'll gradually accrue a motley band of friends and adventurers who you can use in a fight. Each of 'em has their own special abilities and skills. Goombella can identify enemy weak spots, for instance.

YOU'RE A STAR

The aim of the game's to collect seven Crystal Stars, via a map given to you by Peach, who has – as ever – disappeared. So you're looking for the kidnap-prone princess too. You even get to play as her...

extends to defending, too, and to your sidekicks as well, as you'll garner a party of pals who'll help you fight.

It's a brilliant system and one we love, spiced up with a variety of items to use and some inventive special abilities. But there's a further wrinkle to the fighting system that demands you fight well not just for survival, but for approval too. Succeed in a scrap and you'll draw a crowd; consistently deal out damage and throw in the odd special move and they'll start to cheer; and if they cheer, they add to your Star Power, which enables you to use certain special abilities. It's a cracking addition to the fighting system and when you start to draw bigger crowds the thrill is palpable.

This, then, is the basis for *Paper Mario 2* – a solid and entertaining RPG bedrock. But it's what's built above this that makes the game so startlingly joyful. While it may look, in places, like a high-res version of the N64 original, the 2D nature of the game world is always brilliantly presented, with house-fronts folding down to let you in and walls peeling back to reveal staircases, all of which feeds into the 'paper' abilities Mario can get. For example, he can turn side-on – and therefore become almost invisible – to slip through the bars of a jail cell. Because of this, you'll find hidden

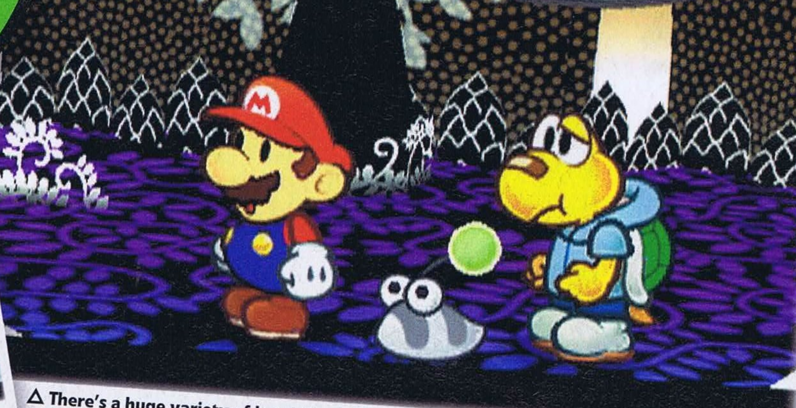
PAPER MARIO 2

He's such a card…



NGC MINISH VERDICT

"It's an RPG through and through – but it also teaches an old genre so many new tricks it's verging on downright rudeness. An inspired battle system, plenty of humour and a raging torrent of innovation."



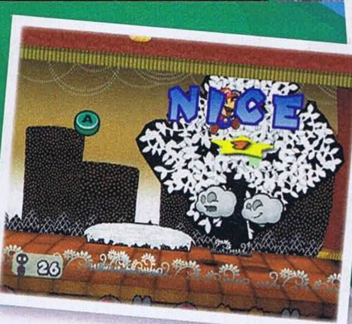
△ There's a huge variety of bumbling bad guys in *Paper Mario 2*. Most of them aren't that bad, really. You don't get the likes of Sauron bumbling around Mario's world.

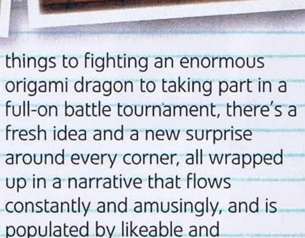


△ Oh, those klutzy Shadow Sirens, eh?

FOLD 'EM

One of the nicest touches relates to our hero's two-dimensional nature (he is made of paper, after all). He'll get regularly – and comically – 'cursed' with the ability to fold himself into a paper plane, or to slip between the bars of a cell.





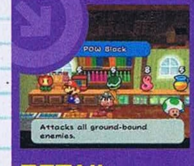
depth in each level, confounding the sense that you're playing in a flat 2D world. Aesthetically, this is one of Nintendo's greatest triumphs yet. If *Wind Waker* was Ninty's first step towards fusing cartoons and videogaming, *Paper Mario 2* in some ways trumps Link's last adventure. It'll take ages to get tired of the dayglo worlds on offer, especially as each is so different and unusual. Invention is *Paper Mario 2's* watchword.

And it really *is* inventive. From controlling hundreds of tiny worm-things to fighting an enormous origami dragon to taking part in a full-on battle tournament, there's a fresh idea and a new surprise around every corner, all wrapped up in a narrative that flows constantly and amusingly, and is populated by likeable and brilliantly-written characters. But it's not perfect. While some fights can get tough, it's usually only because you haven't got enough of the correct items to win – some enemies will be impervious to your regular attacks. Otherwise, *Paper Mario 2* is a fairly simple and straightforward game, and won't tax you in the same way that, say, *Sunshine* did. There's also rather too much wandering around on needless quests and backtracking to previous areas, but you're often rewarded with a surprising plot development or cut-scene, so it's not as frustrating as it might be. And, yep, it's cute and colourful. But if you don't like that, why are you reading this magazine?

Regardless of this, *Paper Mario 2* deserves a spin in your GC. It won't entice the *GTA* faithful to Nintendo's side, nor will it sell a million Gamecubes; it's merely a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what they do best – making the games only *they* can make.

JES BICKHAM

> **"PAPER MARIO HAS A FRESH IDEA AND A NEW SURPRISE AROUND EVERY CORNER"**



RETAIL THERAPY

Make sure you visit shops regularly. While you'll find items in the wild, it's worth stocking up on mushrooms and certain offensive items – some enemies are impervious to your regular attacks and will require hurtage from, say, Fire Flowers or POW blocks. It's that or run away, which will lose you precious coins.



- Genuinely funny.
- Utterly captivating.
- A great Mario game.



- It's not going to sell a million Gamecubes.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Mario and Luigi Superstar Saga
Nintendo
NGC/89, 94%
GBA classic that is in many ways a mini *Paper Mario*.



8 VISUALS

Sometimes basic but oh-so-stylish. Like a living cartoon.



7 SOUNDS

Jaunty tunes and effects, but nothing too fancy.

8 MASTERY

It's a big game that often throws hundreds of monsters around.

8 LIFESPAN

Takes 20-30 hours, but you probably won't play it again.

VERDICT

Another outright classic from Nintendo, but this one is a more rarefied choice than most. It demands to be played.





△ In single-player mode, Cyclops dies quite easily if you're not controlling him directly. The idiot.



△ When in Xavier's mansion you take control of Inferno, a new recruit to the mutant cause.



△ On later levels the sheer number of enemies can make things pretty tough. Thankfully, fighting is never anything short of satisfying. In this instance, Wolverine uses his claws to batter down a wall before taking the enemy by surprise.

X-MEN LEGENDS

Improve on Wolverine? Now you can level ol' scratchy up.

Attention to detail is never a bad thing, especially when it goes as far as the ability to view the loading screen artwork. Bed-side table pictures, character bios, even the tone of voice and dialogue used in conversations between X-Men – it all sounds right, it looks right and it feels right. The fact that *Legends* was written by a group of comic writers who know the X-Men universe inside and out really does show, and for the first time in living memory we're faced with an X-Men game that genuinely lives up to the name.

When you start the game's Story mode, your first impressions are that it's a mediocre hack-and-slash affair. The environments are solid enough, and the character models and animation are okay – they're nothing spectacular (a bit clunky and faceless) but everything is functional and it's certainly not an *ugly* game. The fact that your starting character is Wolverine isn't a bad choice either – and spending your first quarter of an hour smashing up the scenery with your claws and practising basic combos on hordes of identical enemies is mildly enjoyable. However, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that repeatedly bashing away at A and B is going to get very dull very

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER	RAVEN
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	25
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

X-MEN: LEGENDS

RPG basics with added mutants



△ You can smash through walls. △ It's surprisingly easy to keep tabs on all four team members, although keeping them alive is another matter.

AN X-EMPLARY X-PERIENCE

The game has everything you'd expect from an RPG.



The Academy is the main hub, where you accept missions, train and get background information on the X-Men and their enemies.



The main missions are Gauntlet-style excursions around themed levels. The puzzles are unimaginative but the combat is satisfying.



Once you've killed off enough enemies your characters will level up. You can assign points to strengthen them in different areas.



There are loads of characters to find and unlock, each with their own talents – letting you customise your perfect X-Men team for the job.

quickly. Thankfully it improves substantially after an hour of play.

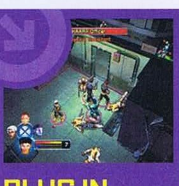
You see, it's not until you get to Xavier's Mutant Academy that things really pick up. *Legends* is actually an RPG of sorts (a little like *Baldur's Gate*) where battles take place in real time and defeated enemies contribute EXP to help you level up. Each new level brings with it a clutch of points that you can spend on improving an X-Man's attributes – giving them new special moves, increasing their strength and agility and so on. In a generous touch, even X-Men who aren't in your party receive some EXP from defeated enemies, so you don't have to swap active characters into your party every five minutes to make sure they get their share of points.

"IT'S NOT UNTIL YOU GET TO XAVIER'S MUTANT ACADEMY THAT THINGS REALLY PICK UP"

Structurally, the game has two parts. The meat of it is the main missions, which revolve around a large area filled with enemies. You work through them, solving basic puzzles and smashing the hell out of everything that moves and everything that doesn't. In between missions you're taken back to the Academy, where you can do a spot of training, talk to the other X-Men, sort out your party with kit and get info on the X-Men universe before accepting another mission. Also, there are loads of challenges to undertake, which you unlock by finding the pick-ups littered around the main mission maps. While they're fairly basic, the challenges are enjoyable in their own right, and working through them increases your X-Man ranking from 'Freshman' to 'Legend'.

All in all it's very enjoyable. As an RPG it's basic, but as an *X-Men* experience, it's fantastic. It has the characters, the mayhem and, more importantly, the faithfulness that fans have deserved for so, so long. Definitely recommended…

GERAINT EVANS



PLUG IN AND PLAY

You and up to three of your friends can join in the action in the game's main missions by simply plugging in the extra controllers. The game has a little trouble keeping tabs on all four of you at once, but it's enjoyable all the same.



- Four-player.
- Fast and frantic.
- Play as Gambit!
- Nice and big.



- Unbalanced difficulty.
- Fairly basic.
- Not a pretty game.
- Dodgy frame rate.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Nintendo
NGC/81 80%
More like a traditional RPG, with a superb co-op mode.





6 VISUALS
Hardly a stunner, with poor definition on the characters.



6 SOUNDS
Repetitive speech samples, average music and FX.



6 MASTERY
Basic gameplay and an inconsistent frame rate.

8 LIFESPAN
A good 20 hours for the main game, with lots of replayability.

VERDICT
It has its problems, but overall it's enjoyable, and the multiplayer adds replay value. A must-have for X-Men fans.















△ This has one of the best battle systems ever, making levelling up much more enjoyable.

NGC MINISH VERDICT

"Although this has a multiplayer mode of sorts, you'll be hard pushed to find three mates to follow the adventure to its conclusion. But as a single-player game it's easily on of the best available for Gamecube. Ark-ark!"

+
- Huge quest.
- Lovely design.
- Brilliant battle system.

−
- Poor voice acting and dialogue.
- Not the most original story.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Skies of Arcadia
Sega
NGC/81 90%
Huge RPG involving magic stones, pirates and airships.



7 VISUALS
Some great design on the characters and locations.



6 SOUNDS
Rubbish spoken dialogue and rather generic music.

7 MASTERY
The battle system is superb – the only really unique feature.



9 LIFESPAN
It's a massive adventure with plenty of side-quests.

VERDICT
A solid RPG with an engaging battle-system and plenty of hours of entertainment. Recommended.

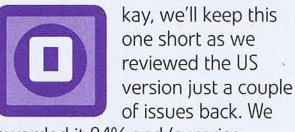
NGC 84

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	NAMCO
RELEASE DATE	19TH NOV
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

TALES OF SYMPHONIA

Gamecube's first decent RPG! If you missed our US review, here's a quick reminder…



Okay, we'll keep this one short as we reviewed the US version just a couple of issues back. We awarded it 84% and (surprise, surprise) the score isn't going to change any time soon. If you didn't get a chance to read our review last time, here's the general gist of what to expect. It's a 'traditional' Japanese RPG, and good looking one at that. The characters are all beautifully designed (they're cel-shaded) and the specific locations you enter throughout the adventure are rarely anything short of stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld, but you should be able to live with that.

> **"THE ONLY THING THAT GOT ON OUR NERVES WAS THE RUBBISH DIALOGUE"**

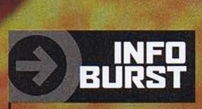
The battle system is probably the best thing about the game (which is a good job as you'll be fighting for over 50 hours in order to level up and defeat bosses). It takes place in real-time. You have direct control over one character plus the ability to influence other characters' behaviour and attacks via a handy Pause menu. If you're so inclined you can also get three of your mates to take control in battle, which is a great touch if you have someone prepared to work through the 60-hour-long adventure with you.

The only thing that really got on our nerves was the rubbish dialogue. There are times when it's pretty appalling and it does kind of spoil the magic a little – likewise, the plot can be pretty clichéd and RPG veterans will find it tiresome in places. Still, there's no arguing that *Tales of Symphonia* is a high-quality RPG, and exactly the kind of thing Gamecube's been in need of for ages.

GERAINT EVANS

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE THIRD AGE

A glorious-looking but annoying wander down Middle Earth’s back alleys.



PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	12TH NOV
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM. CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40







△ You’ll be using this attack a lot to kill wargs.



You’ve got to hand it to EA – they certainly know how to put on a show. Like all of their tentpole titles and big-name games, *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* is an absolute masterclass in production values, a glorious-looking affair that shimmers with a glossy sheen that only a company with a lot of resources, a lot of money and, it must be said, not a little game-development skill and experience can muster. Frankly, *The Third Age* is a glorious evocation of the cinematic Middle Earth; the forests around the Elven haven of Rivendell are lush and green, fading into the snowy wastes of the pass of Caradhras and then the imposing, baroque stonework of the dwarvish mines of Moria. In short, it looks *brilliant*, and it’s to EA’s credit that even though the game is eventually swamped by problems and shortcomings like a cave troll pulled to the ground by frothing Hobbits, it’s always a pleasure to slip into it for a visit to Tolkein’s world.

Graphically, it’s hewn from the same digital bedrock as last year’s triumphant *Return of the King*. While that game, however, was an epic scale slash-’em-up (and once again, it did its job so well that we’re still known to drop it into the disc tray now and then), *The Third Age* is an entirely different cauldron of goblins. It’s an RPG,



No famous faces but a very familiar plot





△ Get used to seeing this kind of thing. There's a metric ass-load of fighting in *The Third Age*.



△ Goblins! Nasty things. Probably smell bad too.



△ Moria goblins are surprisingly tough. The gits.



△ The cut-scenes are genuinely impressive.

for a start, and all the combat is now turn-based – a little like Lord of the Rings meets Final Fantasy, if you will.

Mostly this boils down to random battles. If you've played a few RPGs in your time, you'll know how it is; your party is wandering along, the screen flashes, and hey presto – you're suddenly in a turn-based fight, your party of hardy adventurers pitted against a horde of goblins, orcs, wolflike wargs or, more usually, a combination of all three.

The fighting itself is solid and full of spectacle, although it is almost entirely unoriginal and half-inched from the Final Fantasy series. Each character has a variety of attacks, from regular low-damage affairs to more rarefied skills (including the spell-like Spirit Powers), which use up Action Points. You'll gain more Action Points as you grow with experience. There's a neat balancing act here, as you can't always use your special attacks if your AP stock is low, but the more frequently you do use them, the more skills and attacks you can gain, via a simple but effective skill-tree that lets you choose what you want to learn. Which attacks you use in a given fight also determine when you'll make your move, so there's a certain amount of strategy involved in deciding whether to take the initiative or to hang back to use a more powerful move.

The fighting works, and it works well; and for the first hour or two, *The Third Age* is a highly entertaining romp. But, unlike most other

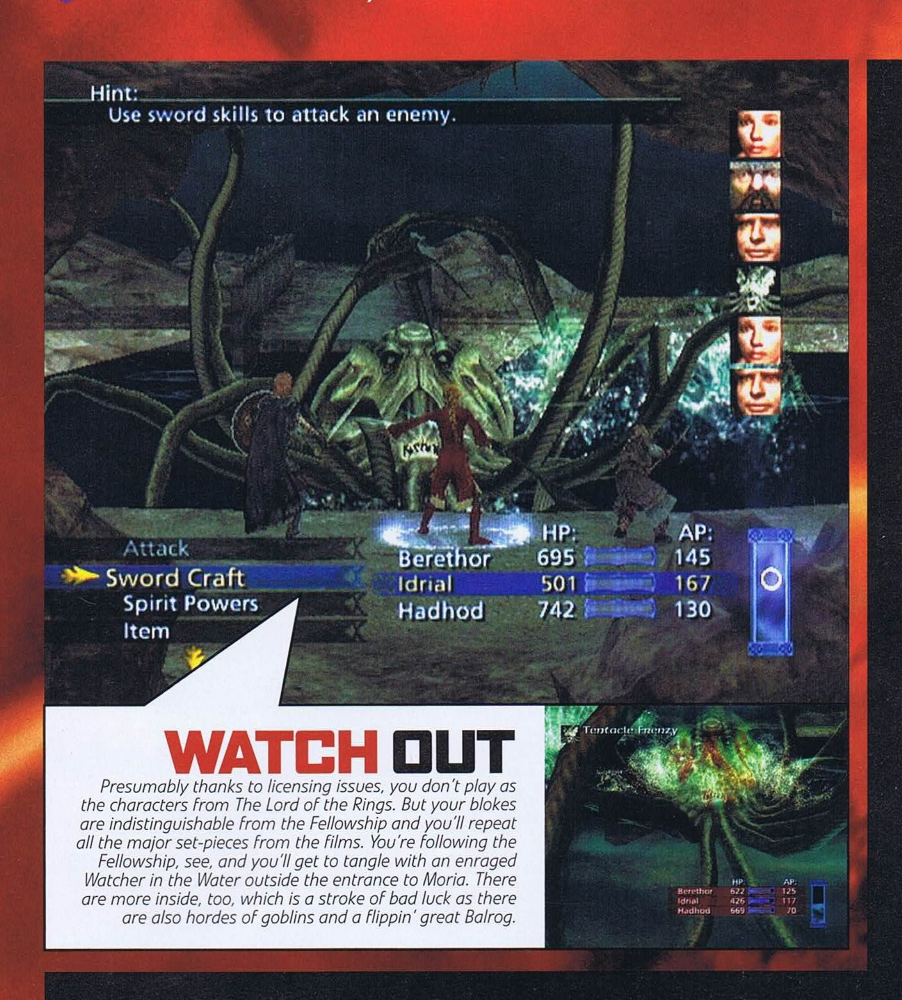
> **"THE FIGHTING ITSELF IS SOLID AND FULL OF SPECTACLE, BUT ALMOST ENTIRELY UNORIGINAL"**



EVIL EYE

A tidy addition to the game is the unlockable Evil mode, which is kind of like the regular game but in reverse. Sort of. Well, not really. But! It does allow you to play certain bits of the game – ie, the fighting – from the point of view of the bad guys, even letting you thump the mock-Fellowship with the Watcher in the Water.

"Comes off as the John Inman of Middle Earth"



WATCH OUT

Presumably thanks to licensing issues, you don't play as the characters from The Lord of the Rings. But your blokes are indistinguishable from the Fellowship and you'll repeat all the major set-pieces from the films. You're following the Fellowship, see, and you'll get to tangle with an enraged Watcher in the Water outside the entrance to Moria. There are more inside, too, which is a stroke of bad luck as there are also hordes of goblins and a flippin' great Balrog.



△ Bow-bearing baddies usually hang back – you'll need to 'taunt' them into reach to hit 'em.



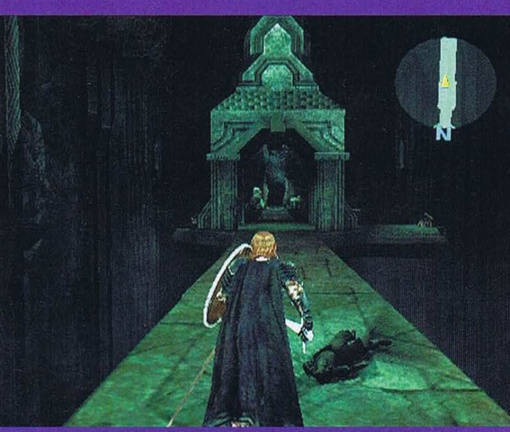
△ Cave Trolls are big and unnecessarily hard. They take a lot of hardcore bashing to go down. A LOT.

INTO THE MINES

Moria is dead impressive but rather frustrating.



■ It's all detailed architecture and claustrophobic tunnels.



■ This section is full of needless backtracking. You'll hate it.



■ You fight nine Cave Trolls – and then a Balrog, for variety.

RPGs, the fighting is literally *all there is to the game*. There are no NPCs for you to talk to and trade with, and no shops to visit (you find items or salvage them after fights rather than buy them). Yes, there's huge scope for building your character as there's a wealth of stats and abilities to upgrade – and personalising each character in your party is at least half the fun of *The Third Age* – but aside from this, scrapping is all you get.

The game is also rigidly linear, some hugely annoying back-tracking not withstanding. This linearity isn't particularly a problem, as the narrative is kept strong and vital as you're funnelled from one encounter to the next, but the fact that the game is simply all fighting makes it very tiresome in the long run. On reaching Balin's Tomb in Moria, it took us the best part of an hour to get through the next room, as every two steps brought yet another random encounter, and all the while we could see the door we were trying to reach across the room, like some kind of desert mirage, tempting us but forever out of reach. It's unimaginative, restrictive, and while building up your characters into exactly the kind of fighting machine you want is always absorbing, the constant combat, without any sort of pressure-release from differing gameplay elements, simply gets incredibly frustrating.

It's a real shame that the game turns out to be so one-dimensional as it does so much else right. That essential Lord of the Rings atmosphere is recreated with fidelity and accuracy, taking you across all the major locations from the films. But you don't play as any of the heroes of the Fellowship, and while revisiting all

> "THERE ARE NO NPCS FOR YOU TO TALK TO AND TRADE WITH, AND NO SHOPS"

NGC MINISH VERDICT

"Hmm. It's a brave effort on EA's part, but it simply isn't good enough. The pacing's all wrong, it's too linear and the idea of getting items from battles removes one of RPGs' best elements – the towns. Graak!"

SWORDS

The fighting in *The Third Age* might be unoriginal, but the turn-based combat is well implemented and full of flash and spectacle. In short, we like it – in brief bursts.



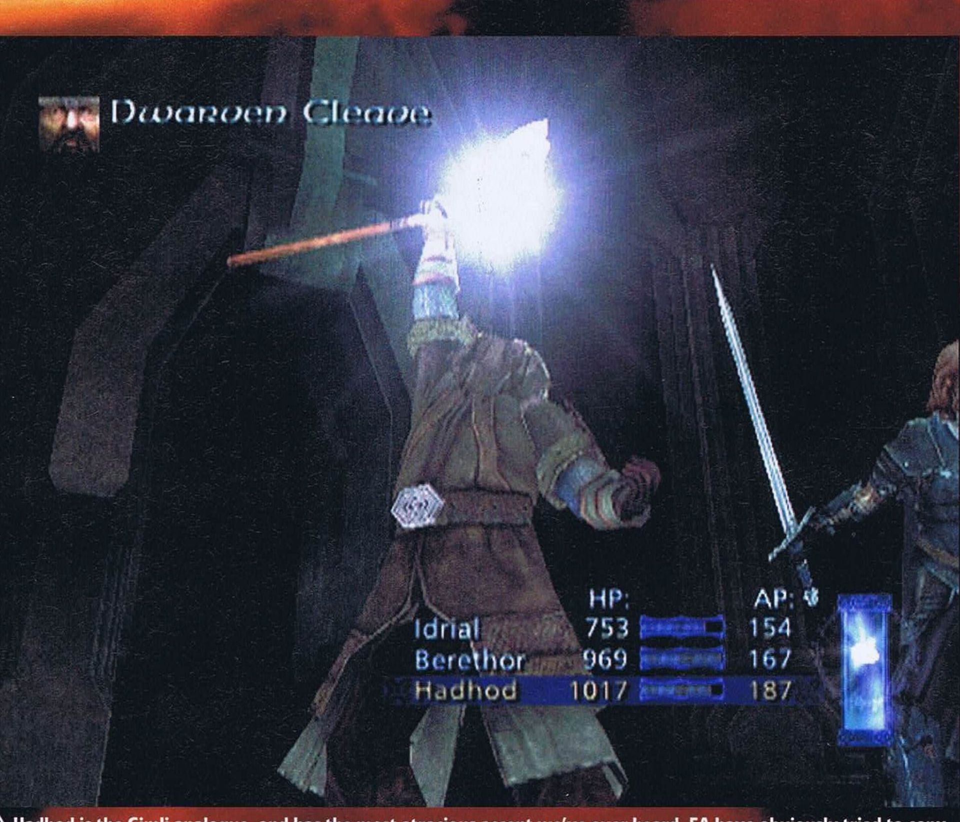
■ Once the fight starts you can use normal attacks, which are weaker than your special abilities but don't require Action Points.



■ Each character has special attacks that have specific effects. Berethor can learn Sword Craft skills. These use Action Points.




■ Some characters can use Spirit Powers, the game's equivalent to traditional magic. The Elf gets the flashiest Spirit Powers.



△ Hadhod is the Gimli analogue, and has the most atrocious accent we've ever heard. EA have obviously tried to copy Gimli's voice but it just doesn't work. However, he is incredibly tough and gets a nice axe in Moria so it's not all bad.

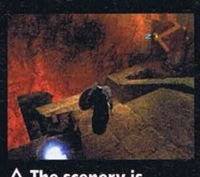


△ More troll-fighting. Painful stuff, this.



△ Even the bad guys get special attacks.





△ The scenery is utterly brilliant. Look!

the touchstone places from the films is palpably thrilling (unless you're Kittsy, who "doesn't like goblins" and therefore hasn't seen any of the Rings films), things do get a little comical as your little group of characters are immediate carbon-copies of the movie protagonists.

You start with Berethor, a Gondorian scout looking for Boromir; he runs into Idrial, a female elf working for Elrond; they then meet Elegost, a Dunedain ranger who's searching for his Dwarf friend Hadhod… and so it goes, even down to Hadhod's frankly terrible Gimli-mimicking accent, which we presume is meant to have a Scottish burr to it but ends up wandering down linguistic back alleys no dialect should ever approach. And Elegost, who is plainly meant to be the game's equivalent of Aragorn, initially comes off as the John Inman of Middle Earth, his first line to the others being a cheery "Hello, lovelies!" – not quite the dour, serious character he's portrayed as immediately after this introduction.

To be fair, the story is for the most part smartly developed, and there are actually some skilful narrative tweaks as you come across places the Fellowship have already been (such as the aforementioned Balin's tomb or defending Helm's Deep and Osgiliath later on). But it's hard to shake the feeling that more could have been done with *The Third Age*, rather than copying the best bits from the films with a different set of characters.

Ultimately, this is a problematic game. It's shallow, one-dimensional and gets very tiresome when played for long stretches due to the fact that all it offers is repeated bouts of fighting leavened with some stat-tweaking and skill-learning. Not what you want from a good RPG. However, we can forgive it a lot because it's one of the most atmospheric games we've ever sat down with and, in short bursts, it's genuinely engrossing. If you're not a Rings fan, there's nothing we can say that'll make you like *The Third Age*; but for the rest of us, this is a curate's egg that, despite its flaws, is worth experiencing.

JES BICKHAM



MOVIE MAGIC

The game's stuffed with extras. You'll unlock movie snippets with alarming regularity – there are loads of them – and while you'll have seen all the footage before it's tied nicely into the game with brand-new dialogue from Ian McKellen as Gandalf, who fills in the story of The Third Age*'s characters.*



■ Astonishing atmosphere.
■ Decent fighting.
■ Nice stat-building.



■ Shallow.
■ Tiresome in long stretches.
■ Repetitive.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

LotR: Return of the King
EA
NGC/87 86%
Unrelenting hack-'em-up with fancy combos and lots of dead orcs.





9 VISUALS
See Middle Earth come alive on your telly. Lovely.



8 SOUNDS
The music from the films and variable voice-acting.



7 MASTERY
Some annoying frame rate drops spoil things a bit.



8 LIFESPAN
We estimate there's about 20 hours of Sauron-smashing.

VERDICT

It's flawed, frustrating, shallow and repetitive, but still capable of RPG-lite thrills, and it offers unrivalled atmosphere.



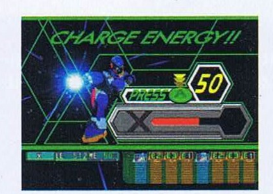




"Like a Saturday morning cartoon"











- Solid battle system.
- Lively and confident presentation.
- Good for novices.



- Too linear.
- Too easy.
- Too short.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Paper Mario 2
Nintendo
NGC/100 91%
Another straightforward RPG that'll delight gamers of every skill level.





NGC MINISH VERDICT

"Not the best RPG, but I'm still fairly fond of it. It doesn't mess around, whipping along at a decent pace and offering a sweet battle system to get to grips with. A good RPG for those without much free time. Arrrrrk!"

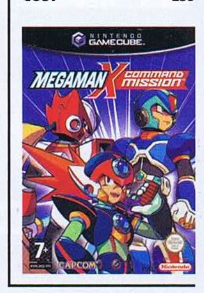
△ Stick Mega Man in Hyper mode and he'll gain some extra strength.

MEGA MAN X COMMAND MISSION

The boy in blue does RPGs too…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE	19TH NOV
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£35



You know, this really isn't as bad as you might expect. No, it's not up to the standard of RPGs like *Tales of Symphonia* – that'll hardly come as a surprise – but it's certainly not as dreadful as *Network Transmission* and in many areas it even manages to shine.

If you hadn't guessed by now this is an RPG. You talk to NPCs. You fight in turn-based random battles, you traverse dungeons and you level up your characters. It's a *very* basic RPG with no real side quests to speak of, a very linear adventure and no need to explore as such. You simply push through the storyline. Hardly an enticing breakdown of the game, we'll admit, but in its own little way *Command Mission* is quite enjoyable. Visually it's no slouch; your cel-shaded characters have plenty of character, in both their looks and dialogue. It feels very much like a Saturday morning cartoon, in that it's very direct, gets straight to the point and doesn't try to be anything other than simple and brash. It's clearly an RPG for the younger gamer, then – and there's really no shame in that. It's not overly complicated or fussy and so anyone who's never touched an RPG in their life will find it relatively simple to get to grips with.

However, beneath its rather simple exterior lie some rather clever ideas. The battle system, for example, is actually very accomplished – and rewarding too, with a decision-making process that revolves around deciding whether to attack as soon as possible or to wait it out to power up attacks. Your planning is aided by the fact that you can see the state of a battle eight turns in advance and so can devise your tactics accordingly. Furthermore, each character's special attacks are played out like minigames, requiring periods of interactivity and skill, rather than just watching your action played out.

> **SPECIAL ATTACKS ARE PLAYED OUT LIKE MINIGAMES, REQUIRING INTERACTIVITY**

Unfortunately the game *is* too linear, and is a little too easy to take seriously, and can therefore we can only really recommend it to novices. Seasoned RPGers will get very bored with it.

GERAINT EVANS



△ It's great to see an RPG with no twee villages and rural glades.

7 VISUALS
Bright, clean and crisp and smooth. Quite nice actually.

6 SOUNDS
Forgettable tunes and bog-standard effects. Not the best.

6 MASTERY
As an RPG it's too basic – but there are some good ideas.

4 LIFESPAN
You'll see it off in a week and you won't want to go back.



VERDICT
Not a bad effort, but RPG veterans won't find anything to engage them. Best left to the youngsters it's aimed at.

NGC 61

The First Review



On Sale 29th October



THE GREAT NGC RPG ROUND-UP

Find your perfect Role Player with our handy breakdown. Stat's the way to do it!

RPGs aren't for everyone – in fact, the players who are into them are still a gaming minority. Some RPGs can be off-putting to the casual gamer, difficult to understand and too demanding in terms of time investment. Some players don't like turn-based battles, others find staring at a screen full of numbers abhorrent and prefer to game in the company of others (something that most RPGs don't allow for). If you're a newcomer to the RPG scene, this page should help you to pick out a game that won't scare you off after the opening intro…



BREAK IT DOWN

Your guide to the individual contents and style of each game…

1. HIGH ADVENTURE *A journey of epic proportions.*

2. MULTIPLAYER *Play with friends!*

3. STAT-HEAVY *Like numbers? Love this.*

4. TACTICAL *For the digital Napoleon in you.*

5. REAL-TIME *Taking turns is for losers.*

6. TURN-BASED *So you can make a cup of tea between attacks.*

7. RANDOM *Surprise attacks every six seconds. Or so.*

8. CARD *Deal us in…*

9. MANAGEMENT *Swap items around like there's no tomorrow.*

10. BYE BYE SOCIAL LIFE *Draw the curtains and hide for months*

NOVICE

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Yes, *we know*. It's not really an RPG but it's a good place to start the ball rolling, with intuitive fights, a cracking adventure and some devious little puzzles.

1 5

X-MEN: LEGENDS
A very player-friendly RPG-lite, and a good introduction to some basic RPG concepts like levelling up, character customisation/development, team-building and management. Stop yawning.

2 3 5

MEGA MAN X: COMMAND MISSION
The shortest and easiest 'traditional' RPG on Gamecube. It's not exactly great, but it's worth considering for the younger gamer who's never touched an RPG in their life.

3 4 6 7

FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES
Simplifies standard RPG elements like stat development and condenses your journey into a series of levels. Requires four GBAs and link cables to play with your mates.

1 2 5 9

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE
One of our favourites this, mainly because of the two-player co-op mode, real-time action-orientated battles, atmospheric levels and enjoyable story. Great with a mate.

1 2 3 5 9

PAPER MARIO 2
Underneath the cuddly exterior is an RPG with an innovative battle system, original touches and a wicked sense of humour. Worth a look for both veterans and novices.

1 4 6 9

POKÉMON COLOSSEUM
A turn-based battle marathon with not much else in between. Requires a decent knowledge of Pokémon and a well-played copy of *Ruby, Sapphire, Fire Red* or *Leaf Green*.

2 3 4 6 10

LOST KINGDOMS 1&2
Both enjoyable adventures, which are fairly short – making them an ideal choice for anyone who's curious about card battles but has been too scared to take the plunge…

1 3 4 5 8

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE
This is really heavy on the item management and random battles, and despite some nice ideas turns out to be pretty mediocre. RPG-loving Rings fans will appreciate it, though.

1 3 4 6 7 9

TALES OF SYMPHONIA
Easy on the eye with a deep-but-accessible battle system. It's heavy on the clichés but it's stunningly presented and a joy from start to finish. One of the better GC RPGs.

1 2 3 4 5 9 10

SKIES OF ARCADIA
A huge gameworld, an epic story and loads of depth to the battle system. However, you'll need the patience of a saint to put up with the incessant random battles.

1 3 4 6 7 9 10

SUMMONER: GODDESS REBORN
Hardcore – if only for the fact that it's not really very good and therefore requires an insatiable lust for RPGs to get the most out of it. Only the most persistent need apply.

1 3 5 9 10

GLADIUS
A tactical battler that starts off intensely dull but actually turns out to be pretty good in the end. Requires dedication before it eventually becomes rewarding.

3 4 6 9

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP1&2
A time-sucking black hole. Be prepared to buy a modem, keyboard and monthly subscription before abandoning friends and loved ones for this digital nirvana.

1 2 3 4 5 9 10

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE III C.A.R.D. REVOLUTION
Not only do you have to love RPGs, but you have to love the Phantasy Star universe AND card battle games. If that's you then put a side a few spare years to play…

2 3 4 6 9 10

HARDCORE

CITY MAP
Everything happens on this GTA-style map. It's a huge area, so there's a handy navigation arrow for finding your way to your chosen event.

AGGRESSION
The best way to lose your rivals is to shunt them into a wall so they end up facing the wrong way. It's quite easy when you know how.

PILE UP
Like a certain other racing game, the camera pulls away to show crashes in their full glory. Sadly there's no car damage, and not enough traffic to make a decent smash.



PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	19TH NOV
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM. CARD PAGES	7
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Hot city nights and eye-bleeding graphics.



This game is so realistic, it starts with a warning to drive safely on real roads and wear your seatbelt. The attention to detail even extends to simulating the way hard suspension and skinny tyres shake you to pieces at high speed, blurring your vision and inducing a massive headache.

Or is that just the effect of playing a driving game with super jerky graphics? Yep, *NFSU2* improves on every single aspect of last year's version bar one: they still haven't figured out how to make the on-screen action move at a decent frame rate.

Perhaps the developers don't care. Why should they when the previous equally jerky instalment sold like fluffy dice at a Capri owners' festival? But we certainly care, and it's galling to see what should have been the definitive Gamecube racing game spoiled by something that should have been stamped on hard in the early stages of playtesting.

> **"YOU'LL BE BEWILDERED AT THE AMOUNT OF THINGS YOU CAN DO TO YOUR VEHICLE"**



HO'D SAFETY
As a top street racer, you're a big hit with the ladies. This one likes you so much she sends a cardboard cutout of herself to warn you about wearing a seatbelt. She does this every time you load the game. It's because she cares, so don't skip past it just because all the cut-scenes are dodgy.

Setting aside the likelihood of this game giving you a thorough epilepsy workout, it's quite good. If you thought last year's edition went a bit over the top with all the customisation options, you'll be utterly bewildered by the amount of things you can do to your vehicle here. From cosmetic extras to the serious business under the bonnet, even the tiniest details can be changed and changed again until you're completely happy.

Long before that happens, you'll win enough races to have the cash you need to buy a better basis for your custom coupe. You can challenge other drivers as you cruise the streets, or head directly for organised events with bigger

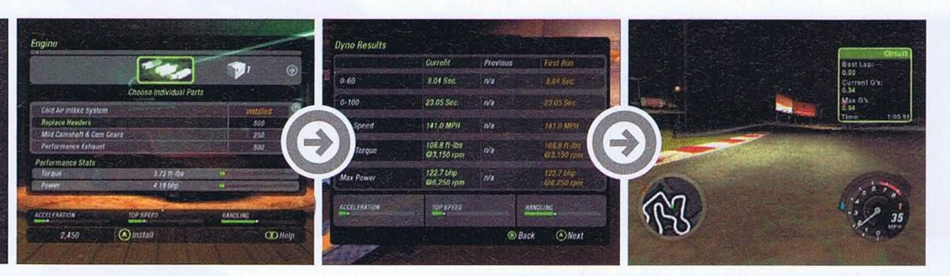
NFS UNDERGROUND 2

Nice game, shame about the j-j-jerkin-jerk-jerky graphics



WELL TUNED

Unlike most car games you can see the results of your engine tweaking right away, either by looking at the tuning computers or whizzing along the test track outside the workshop. It's very thoughtful, and makes us quite happy.

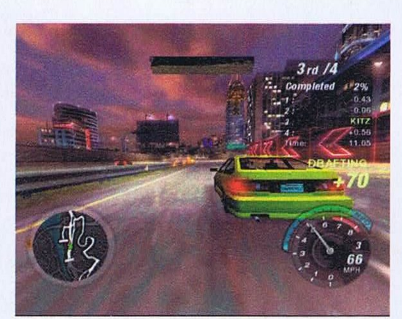




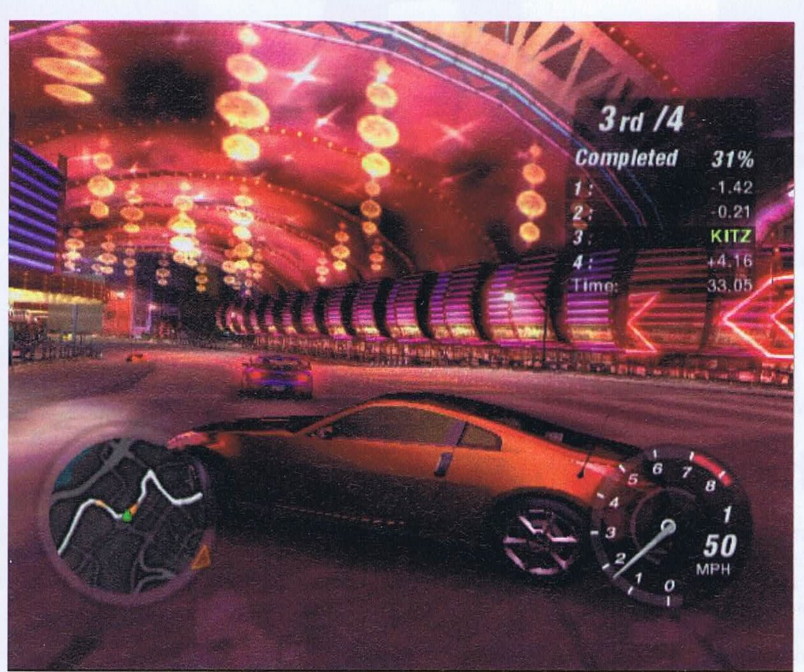
△ There isn't a huge volume of traffic on the road. The whole game is set after dark.



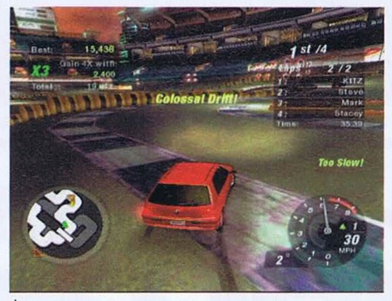
△ Hold the C-stick for a quick look behind you if you're being dogged by a rival racer.



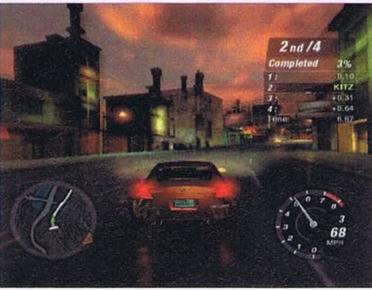
△ There's so much potential for this to be a great game rather than just a big seller.



△ The city has everything from quiet suburbs to concrete freeways to this Vegas-style district. You should be able to play a criminal, stealing cars and shooting people. Nice idea for a game.



△ Drift mode's still strange. Winning the race is less important than skidding a long way.





△ Drive around until you find an area that looks good for racing. Then have a race there.

prizes. Drag races and drift contests add variety to the more traditional jaunts around street circuits.

Handling varies a lot from car to car, which is definitely a good thing. You can choose the type of motor that best suits your taste or if you can't find one, you can create it in the custom shop. The realism doesn't extend to the collision physics – you can drive with a rival car stuck to your bumper if you time it right – but most other things are done reasonably well.

It's going to be a big hit, and maybe the effort that went into making the game so vast merits success. Shame they couldn't have concentrated a little more on the things that make a great game rather than just a long one.

MARTIN KITTS



SEE THAT?

That's your next objective. Drive into one of these ghostly patches of light to access a race. The colour indicates the race type. If you'd rather just cruise the fairly empty streets, you can drive around looking for rivals to run off the road.

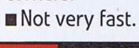




- Customise your ride.
- Cruise the streets.
- Loads of events.



- Jerky graphics.
- Hard to see corners.
- Not very fast.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Burnout 2
Acclaim
NGC/80 90%
Incredibly fast and smooth, with much better handling. Leaves *NFSU* for dead.





5 VISUALS

Rough cut-scenes, disappointing frame rate.



6 SOUNDS

Whoah, dude. This game is totally stoked to be here.



5 MASTERY

It's a racing game. They have got to be fast and smooth.



8 LIFESPAN

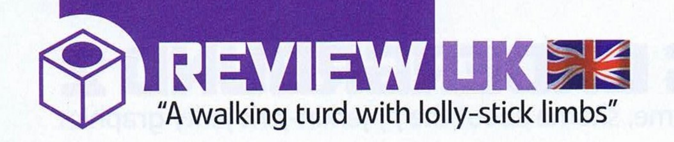
You can spend forever modding your car.

VERDICT

Looks a lot better in static screens than in motion, although you'll probably get used to it if you make the effort.



NGC 69



"A walking turd with lolly-stick limbs"







Δ Here's a quick test. Read this sentence, then close the magazine, grab a bit of paper, and try to draw Ty... How did you get on? If he's recognisable, then buy this game.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 2 BUSH RESCUE

Strewth, cobber! It's the toughest kids' game ever!



PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	KROME STUDIOS
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM. CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40





Tediously generic characters roaming colourful landscapes? Yep. A mascot nobody would mourn if he was irrecoverably deleted from his developer's hard drive, and replaced in future sequels by a walking turd with lolly-stick limbs and peanuts for eyes? Oh yeah.

> THERE'S A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES, FROM PILOTING A MECH TO DRIVING CARS

A comically low difficulty setting to ensure toddlers can at least complete the first few levels by thumping the pad against the floor? Pfff. Not this time.

Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2 ticks every box bar one on the Kiddie Game checklist. It looks cute and sweet; you won't be able to remember the main character's face for more than 20 seconds after switching off the console; but, by the ghost of Yoshi's Fruit Adventure, it's murderously tough.

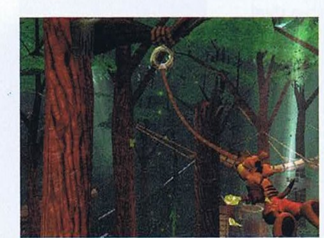
You'll be asked to make precision jumps onto disappearing platforms, while simultaneously fending off hordes of antipodean enemies. Before you can even get to the main area of the game, you'll have to tackle a shoot-'em-up section where you're attacked from all sides, complicated by a narrow field of vision and an annoyingly weak weapon.

Occasionally it is as simple as the *Spyro the Dragon* clone you'd expect it to be. Then, just when you think the game has finally grasped the concept of 'difficulty curve' as opposed to 'difficulty brick wall', it throws up a real face-slapper of a challenge.

There's a wide variety of activities here, from piloting a mech to driving cars, and loads of weapon upgrades (including 21 for Ty's feeble regular boomerangs) that unlock paths further into the game's vivid world. The karting minigame, available from the very start, is absolutely dreadful, but the rest of the game is competent if uninspired.

Mario fans aren't going to be impressed with any of this, which is the eternal problem with releasing this kind of game on a Nintendo console. But it's a decent enough B-list platformer, and if you're in the market for one of those you can add *Ty 2* to the ever-lengthening list.

MARTIN KITTS



Δ Ty swings from the trees exactly like a Tasmanian tiger doesn't.



- Platforming, shooting and driving.
- Graphics aren't too bad.



- Annoying characters.
- Painful difficulty level.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Tak and the Power of Juju
TDK
NGC/92 69%
A slightly more accomplished platformer.



7 VISUALS
Resembles a paintball explosion in a furry toy factory.

6 SOUNDS
Like Mario with Rolf Harris instead of Charles Martinet.

4 MASTERY
That karting sub-game is damn near inexcusable.

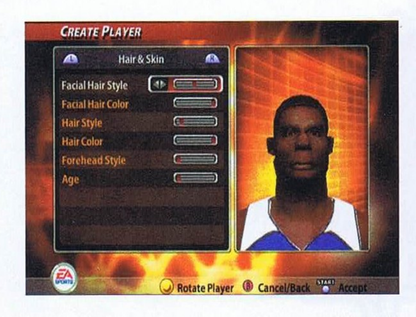
6 LIFESPAN
Has a harsh difficulty level and very little replay value.

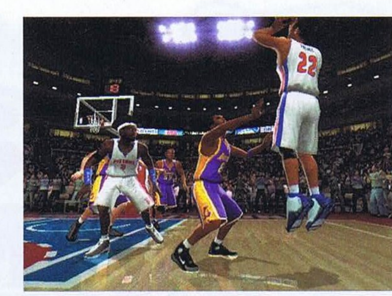
VERDICT

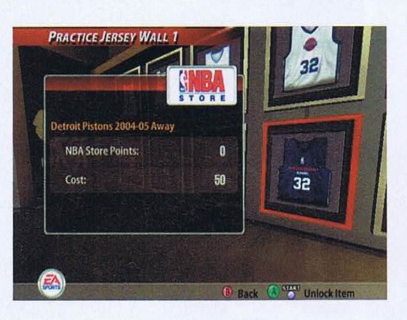
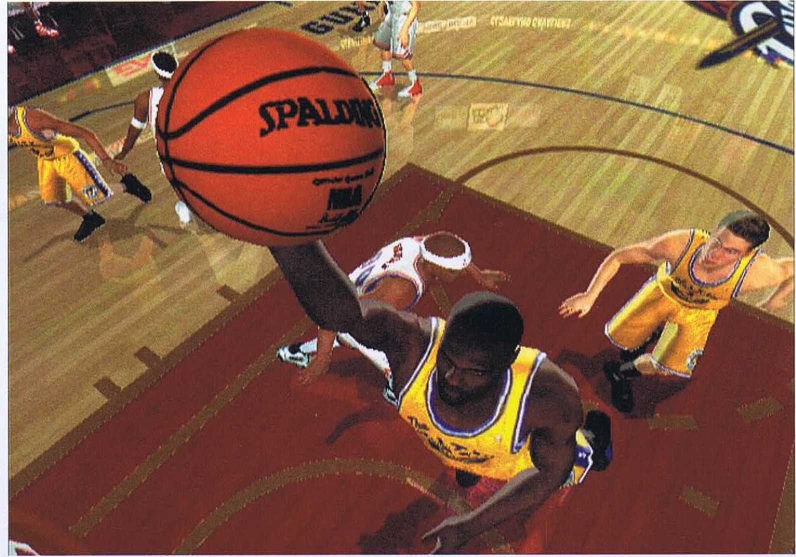
It's hard to tell who this is aimed at, given its bright colours and unforgiving nature. It's definitely not us...



NGC 64







Δ Using the game's impressive Replay mode, you can rewind, fast-forward, zoom in, zoom out and twirl round until your heart's content. Largely pointless, admittedly, but it does look slick.

NBA LIVE 2005

A basketball update. Now there's a novelty.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	38
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



You know *NBA Live 2005* is good. You know it's got everything you'd ever need from a game of hoops. You know the Career mode is so vast you need an ice pick and crampons to scale it, the game so fast and fluid it moves from defense to offense before you've even had a chance to stop for breath, and you know the introduction of the truly innovative Slam Dunk mode – a kind of *Mario Party* with balls – is only going to help its cause.

But, somehow, you can't *love* it. Not in the same way you can love *Madden* for its razzmatazz and tactical acumen, or *NHL* for its violence or even *FIFA* for its all-powerful license. Because for all the things *Live* does right – and it does plenty – it still has an air of detachment, a feeling that you could play this on autopilot from beginning to end, turn it off and instantly forget everything about it.

See, *Live's* basketball is too easy. Too *simple*. There are stacks of moves, but you don't really have to learn them, and indeed have no compulsion to. Master about 35% of what's on offer here and you're away, ripping hoops off glass panels as you steamroller your way from one end of the court to the other, leaving chunks of charred flesh in your wake. At least in games like *Jam*, *Hangtime* and *Street* the moves were utterly ludicrous, defying gravity and setting things on fire. Here, the spectacle of the slam dunk, a move that's so awesome in the heat of a live NBA play off, is just something that happens (and *happens every time*) once you've passed your way to the opposite D. There's no real learning curve and, more worryingly, no reason to stick around. In fact, in terms of the actual matches, the heartbeat of *Live*, you could see all it has to offer in a single game.

> "THERE'S NO REAL LEARNING CURVE AND, WORRYINGLY, NO REASON TO STICK AROUND"

So, our score may seem harsh given the outstanding back-up afforded to matches by the likes of Dynasty mode, the rosters, the excellent franchise and creation modes and the aforementioned Slam Dunk – and, in truth, we do feel a little guilty. But not enough.

TIM WEAVER


Δ Euro All Stars vs International All Stars. The Euro are largely rubbish.


- Massive Dynasty mode.
- Comprehensive.
- Fast and fluid.


- Easy. Too easy.
- Gets boring quickly.
- Strangely soulless.
- Some slowdown.


IF YOU LIKE THIS...

NBA Street Vol 2
EA Big
NGC/84 88%
Not perfect, or as statistically vast – but a hell of a lot more fun.




8 VISUALS
Cracking detail whether you're up close or far away.


8 SOUNDS
Tremendous commentary that very rarely repeats.


7 MASTERY
Big, technically accomplished, only the occasional glitch.


5 LIFESPAN
It's massive, but it'll start dying after an hour or so.

VERDICT
Awesomely comprehensive behind the scenes, slightly inadequate on court. Difficult to score, this.


NGC 71



Δ Command a gun turret and shoot down big silver robot spacecraft. But you're a robot yourself – is this a wry political commentary? Or just a shoot-'em-up game?

TERMINATOR 3 THE REDEMPTION

Dead or alive you're going with him. Or there will be… Trouble.



What a movie series it was… Mind you, the way that brat wouldn't let Arnie hurt anyone in the second film was feeble. And there was a rubbish bit in the third one too – from shortly after the opening sequence to just before the end credits. But apart from that, Terminator flicks kick arse.

The same isn't true of Terminator games, which to date have conveyed precisely none of the violent thrills and gloomy atmosphere found in the best parts of the films. You could have more fun recreating key scenes from the first movie with a Plasticine Terminator and some bits of blu-tak for cops. But there's finally a game that does justice to the role that made Arnie famous. Shame it's based on the weakest instalment in the series.

Terminator 3 is a third-person shooter where you take control of the greatest screen robot since 7-Zark-7, and go around blasting a path through enemy droids in the future, Los Angeles cops in the present day, and the indestructible TX Terminator which is usually on your tail.

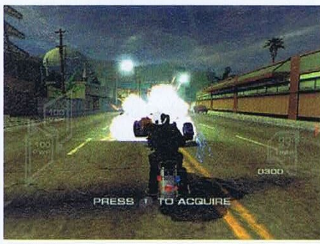
It's not all stomping and shooting. It involves driving too, either on a motorbike or as the gun-toting passenger on somebody else's ride. There's even a bit that's reminiscent of the flight into the Death Star from Star Wars titles, and everything from the truck chase through the storm drains to the battles with the machines in the future looks like the appropriate part of the movie series.

As you're supposed to be helping the humans, your shots will destroy vehicles but leave the occupants unharmed, which is unsatisfactory. And in most levels you'll probably die a few times before you realise what you're meant to be doing. But it's good fun and, until they get the same development team working on a proper all-killing, all-evil Terminator 1 game, it'll remain the only excuse for Arnie to be allowed near a console.

MARTIN KITTS



Δ LA airport looks a lot friendlier after a spot of nuclear apocalypse.



Δ Arnie reloads by twirling his shotgun just like in the movie. Just like it!

INFO BURST

FROM	ATARI
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	4
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **76**



Δ Learn to skate, loser! Heh, heh, heh.



Δ What? That's not a skateboard.



Δ See how the characters are sort of stumpier than before? And there's a new font for the status display in the corner? That'll convince the doubters this is worth £40.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

It's almost a daily grind for skateboarding's superstar.



With the Tony Hawk series notching up its sixth instalment in five years, there can't be many people who haven't experienced at least one version of this once-revolutionary game and its countless inferior imitators. But while the scooting, BMXing and roller-skating copycats are fading memories, Tony Hawk rumbles on, propelled by the still-warm corpse of MTV's Jackass and the confidence of a man who dared name his son Keegan.

You know exactly what to expect from this, and if you're a fan you've probably already bought it. It has been in the shops for a few weeks because Activision decided not to send us a review version, which is strange considering how competent the game turned out to be. Perhaps they'd forgotten they had yet another Hawk title to promote.

This time the graphics have been given a slightly more cartoony feel, and the Story mode features an inordinate amount of Bam Margera, who may as well have taken star billing from Tony Hawk. If you're not a fan of Bam's MTV series, you're not going to be able to stand more than ten minutes of his antics, which Americans might refer to as 'goofing around' (ie behaviour that would rightly earn you a dry slap anywhere else on earth).

Like the previous *Underground*, there are some bits that really don't belong in a skateboard game – driving vehicles, spray-painting walls and running around on foot. These bits are still crap, and should have been left out.

Everything else is great, and as a sop to fans who mourned the loss of the two-minute timer that helped make the early games in the series so tightly focused, large parts of the first three versions have been included here, along with that brain-sharpening time limit.

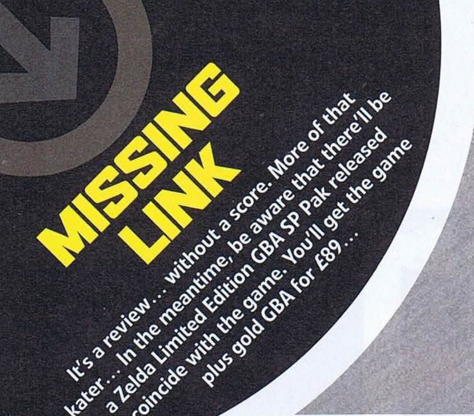
MARTIN KITTS



INFO BURST

FROM	ACTIVISION
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	13
WIDESCREEN	YES
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **82**



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE MINISH CAP

△ Oooh! Rain. We're SERIOUSLY excited.

Not only has Link shrunk – the review code's been minimised too.

So the review code arrives in the office. We turn it on, eagerly anticipating another beautiful adventure. Anticipating the surprises Nintendo have up their sleeves and grinning ear to ear at the mere thought of-… er, hang on… there's something not quite right here. After the title screen fades away we're asked to choose from 'Dungeon1' or 'Dungeon2'. Asked whether we want to begin in the 'Field' or in the 'Village'. This wasn't *quite* the way we thought the game would start. It's not *quite* the kind of surprise we were expecting from Nintendo…

We choose the 'Village' option and the game begins. Link is tucked up in bed along side his Minish Cap. 'This is more like it!' we think to ourselves – and then it hits us. Hits us like a cruel kick in the plums. Link wakes up and his bird-like titfer comes out with the not-so-classic line of dialogue, "Today's the day of the ever-incredible E3 show". What? E3? We swear blind, you could hear our collective screams half a mile away. This wasn't review code. It was the E3 demo we played *over five months ago*. Was this what we were expected to review the game from? Apparently (and *outrageously*) so.

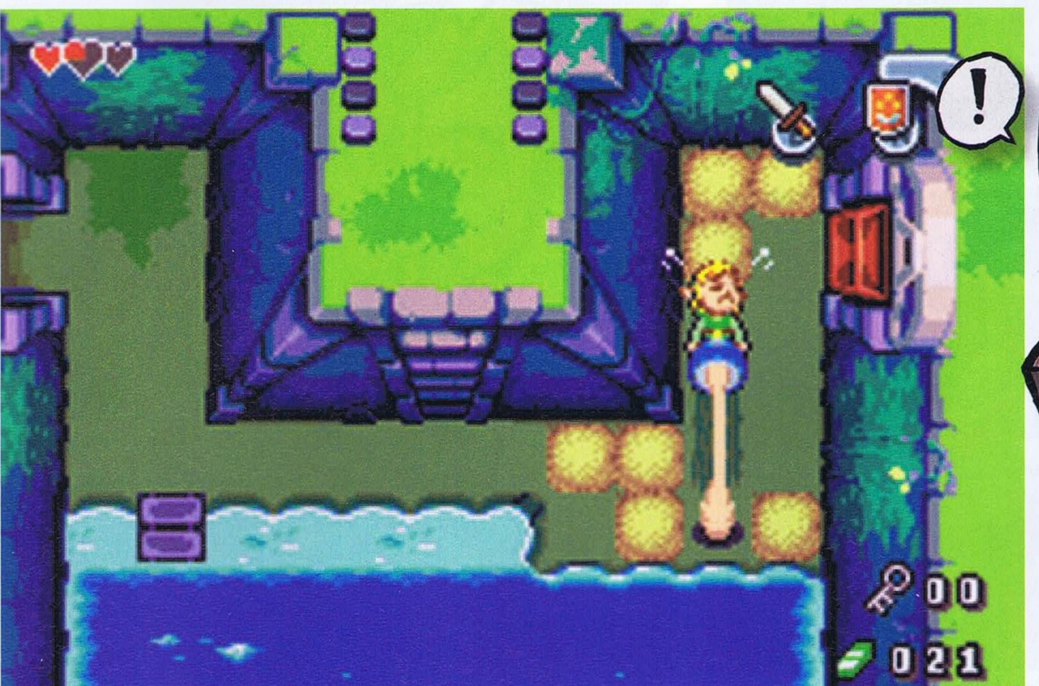
This is unacceptable, of course. Would you review a book after only reading a couple of chapters? We wouldn't. You deserve better than that. We'd like to keep our integrity intact, thank you very much – and we certainly like to sleep at night knowing we haven't lied to you or intentionally deceived you. So bear this in mind – when you read a review of *Minish* be aware that the only available code


DID YOU KNOW? Geraint's Minish Cap in the RPG special was made by Mim. The base of the hat is a cone, and the head was made by drawing round a tea plate and gathering the edge. Go on, make one.











△ Latch onto these springy mushrooms and you can catapult yourself over any gaps in the environment.

SHRINKY LINK

Shrinking to the size of an ant is the central hook in Minish Cap. In order to do so you'll need to find special stumps to transform yourself into the pint-sized pixie. Once small, you can interact with the Minish People as well as walk through cracks and holes. However, there are dangers. Shallow waters when you're 'normal' Link become deadly.







in the UK at the time of writing is an E3 demo. It's all anyone's being given. Four tiny, tantalising parts of the finished game…

So, no score then. We will, however, describe what we've played so far. Think of it as a teaser, to let you know in-depth what sort of thing you can expect, before we actually get the finished game.

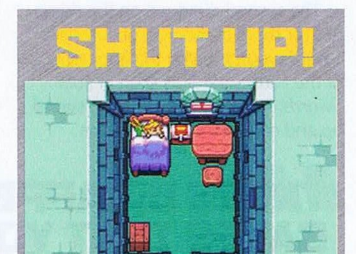
'Field' is the first area of the demo. You guide Link around a little woodland area and place him on a tree stump. There's not a lot going on in the main woodland, but a quick tap on the R button prompts the Minish Cap into chanting a little incantation, and before you know it Link's falling into the stump – shrinking with every downward bounce on a clump of little toadstools. When you eventually emerge from the tree stump you're a mere few pixels tall, allowing you access to areas in the woodland that were previously inaccessible and pretty much invisible.

It's only when you enter the little Minish village here that the game really starts to impress. While the normal-sized Link's overworld looks just as you'd expect, the tiny world of the Minish people is utterly enchanting. Huge leaves, blades of grass and delicately coloured flowers frame the paths you follow and hang above in the foreground, giving not just a sense of depth, but a level of detail we haven't seen on a 2D Zelda game in an absolute age. Only *Four Swords* has come close – and that's not available in Europe, so *Minish* will be a revelation to gamers over here.

Work through the tiny Minish village and you enter the first dungeon. It's dead small and the puzzles involve nothing more then pushing blocks around. No surprises there, then, with your acquisition of a magic jar being the only thing worth of note. This jar lets you suck objects from afar

> **"SUCK A SPRINGY MUSHROOM OVER A GAP, STRETCHING IT OUT LIKE AN ELASTIC BAND"**

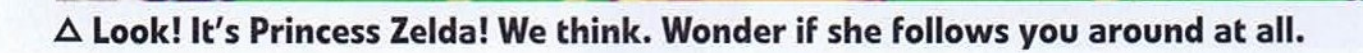
SHUT UP!



Quite how Link acquires the Minish Cap is anyone's guess. In the version that we have, Link already has it – and in a couple of sections begins by sleeping with it. At various points (like when you need a new feature explained to you) the hat jumps off your head and fills you in on important details. Maybe it's just us, but we get the feeling that, like Tingle and Navi, it could get annoying after a while.

"To the casual observer it's madness"

△ The level of detail is far greater than in *LttP* – almost matching *Four Swords*.



△ Look! It's Princess Zelda! We think. Wonder if she follows you around at all.



as well as shoot out puffs of air at enemies. Try it out on nearby patches of dirt and the effect is stunning – the little gusts throw up swirls of dust in a way that's strangely reminiscent of the cel-shaded effects in *Wind Waker*.

The jar does have its uses, bringing some new ideas and solutions to puzzles to the game. In one (practical) use of the jar you have to suck a springy mushroom over a gap, stretching it out like an elastic band. Once your jar has latched on to the flexible fungus, it catapults you across to the other side of the gap, which was too wide for you to cross in the normal way. A small thing maybe – but it certainly made us smile.

The second dungeon on the demo has far more in the way of surprises – our favourite being the appearance of the Four-Sword (as seen in *Four Swords*. Aha!). By charging the sword up and carefully placing Link on different panels, it's possible to split the wee man up into four. Whichever panels you choose to place Link on determines the formation your four Links end up in, and managing your formation is the key to solving puzzles. For example, arrange four Links in a row and you can make them work together to push blocks too heavy for a single Link to move. Likewise, arrange them in a 2x2 square and the quartet will be heavy enough to depress switches that a single Link couldn't otherwise weigh down. It's a smart little mechanic, and we're looking forward to seeing how this will be exploited later in the game.

There are a number of pleasingly familiar sights too. Link can use his Minish Cap as an impromptu glider-cum-parachute, letting him use air currents to maintain his height and

"TREES DISAPPEAR TO REVEAL CAVES THAT YOU CAN EXPLORE. SECRET ENTRANCES OPEN"



△ **Honestly. To think that we were expected to review from five-month old unfinished code and a collection of Japanese screenshots. We have absolutely no idea, for example, where this place is. Send your suggestions in, please…**









△ **There are a number of touches that are reminiscent of previous Zelda and Nintendo games. This bit reminds us of the pond in *Mario Sunshine*.**

drift above the ground. It's all very similar to *Wind Waker's* Deku Leaf. Likewise, in the village section of the demo, there's a wobbly post-box like the one outside the houses in *Wind Waker*. Even everyone's favourite horse, Epona, makes an appearance, carrying milk from Lon Lon (which you then have to go and get for Zelda – who appears at the start of this section to explain the importance of things called kinstones.

A kinstone is actually one half of a stone emblem. You'll find them hidden under bushes, in grass, under rocks – pretty much everywhere. When you find one, you can pick it up. In the miniature village in the demo, practically everyone is in possession of one half of a kinstone. Simply walk up to them, tap the L button and a stone menu will pop up. Match the NPC's kinstone with your half (if you've got one) and something special will happen. And no, we don't just mean you get a bunch of poxy rupees. The effects are far more dramatic. Whole trees disappear to reveal caves that you can explore. Secret entrances open. Chests magically pop out of the ground, Tingle's disgusting face makes an appearance (aargh!) and, in one instance, a couple of seedlings sprout before growing into a colossal beanstalk that rises into the heavens – presumably for you to climb.

It's the little things like this that, even though we've not played the finished game, suggest to us that the Zelda magic really is there. It's been so long since we've had a proper 2D Zelda (not counting *Four Swords*) and Nintendo seem to be very much on the right track with this.

SCALING

On top of the added detail in the mini-world areas, Nintendo have gone a bit nuts with the scaling effects. In this example, Link is walking around the inside of a big cylinder – rotating it until he reaches the exit he requires. Similar effects are used for scaling some of the bosses. At the end of the first little dungeon you face off against a giant wobbling Chu Jelly that flings little globs of jelly all over the shop.

So there it is. We apologize for not being able bring you a score – believe us, it wasn't for want of trying to get hold of something remotely approaching a finished game. But the fact is it's just not available. The game's out on 12th November – our next issue's out on the 25th. Oh, and apologies for the rant at the start too. It's just that we felt we should be honest about stuff. Believe it or not, we really do give a s- (*Maybe you should have a lie down now, eh?* – Ed)

GERAINT EVANS



INFO BURST

FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE CART	
LINK	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	12TH NOV
COST	£29.99

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING ??

"Focuses on the witless and unlovely"











△ Destroy a car with a shotgun and watch the frame rate keel over and die.

PAYBACK

A brave 3D GTA clone with a positively criminal frame rate…


When you start playing this, you can't help being impressed. It's in proper 3D. The environment revolves around your character, the streets are detailed, the explosions meaty, and once you get the hang of the controls you can convince yourself that it's going to be good. Five minutes later the game ruins itself. *Payback* is a bit like *GTA*, with mission-giving phone-boxes, police – the whole shebang. The trouble is, the minute you get past the tutorial and into a vehicle it falls flat on its face.

Despite its initial impressiveness, the 3D causes the problems. The frame rate is atrocious in places – so bad we had trouble looking at it at times. If you're not on foot, the game handles like a pig, boasting what feels like 60 frames per *minute*. Get into a car any faster than a truck and the screen stutters so much you can feel your eyes straining while they struggle to compensate.

A bit of a failure, then. There is a half-decent game hidden behind all the jarring visuals. It's got some quality elements too, like the way people explode in a shower of blood and the 'irony bonus' earned for running someone over with their own car, but ultimately *Payback* needs a few more months in development.

GERAINT EVANS







△ Upgrading your car makes one hell of a difference to your…



△ …performance. You can even buy weapons like rockets.



△ Look out for any shortcuts off the beaten track to gain some positions.

RACING GEARS ADVANCE

The Volvo of racers. Solid, reliable… unexciting.

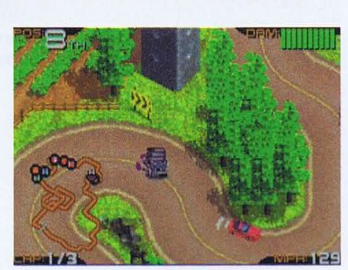

This is one of those games that slips under the radar, only to turn out to be rather enjoyable. It's an isometric racer in the *Rock 'n' Roll Racing*, *Super Sprint* vein, where you compete on successively more difficult championship courses.

It's a solid game with plenty of features to keep things interesting. You can upgrade your chosen vehicle by winning cash from races or collecting it off the track and spending it in the game's shop. You can buy enhancements for your engine, tyres, brakes and so on, plus weapons, from oil-slicks to rockets. This isn't anything new, but *Racing Gears* doesn't put a foot wrong. The handling is simple and tight, making it instantly accessible, while with practice you'll find you can use the brake to powerslide your way around difficult bends.

The tracks are clear and well designed, with weather conditions affecting traction and some nice surrounding artwork to help keep things feeling polished. However, despite the fact that it never puts a foot wrong, it doesn't push the boat out either. It's rarely exciting, it doesn't really get our pulses racing and it doesn't do *anything* to grab our attention. Which is a shame, as it's an otherwise perfectly enjoyable racer.

GERAINT EVANS

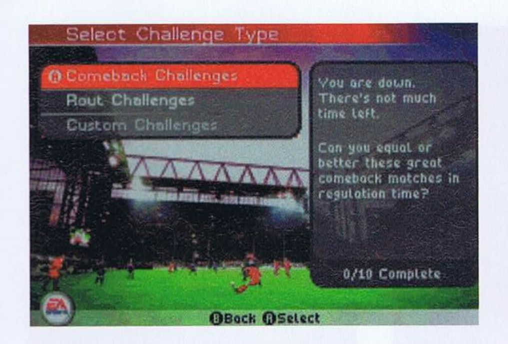




△ Tapping the brake lets you slide around corners like a dream.



△ A wide range of vehicles to choose from and plenty of scope to upgrade.















△ After every goal you're treated to an action replay so you can savour the moment. Honestly, this is really good stuff.

FIFA 2005

The greatest goals you'll score with your hands – and get away with.



You may want to take a seat for this one, because it's not something you'll hear us say often. The latest GBA *FIFA* is actually very good. There, we've said it – and we don't feel in the slightest bit dirty for it either.

> **LIMITING YOU TO PASSES, LOBS, THROUGH-BALLS AND SHOTS MAKES FOR INTUITIVE PLAY**

For some reason the game just *feels* right. Player movement is fluid, the control scheme is in no way fussy – limiting you to simple passes, lobs, through-balls and shots makes for simple and intuitive play. As a straight-up, enjoyable game of football it works wonderfully. All the usual problems of handheld footie games have been ironed out admirably.

Our usual gripe with games like this is the poor and limited viewing area on the GBA's little screen, which makes setting up elaborate plays virtually impossible. Thankfully, this isn't a problem with *FIFA*, and so you never feel as though the game's restricting what you want to do on the pitch. The only major problem we have is the lack of difficulty on the default setting, which lets you fool the goalkeeper all too easily. Happily this is fully customisable, letting you tweak opposition strength in open play and the competence of the opposing keeper. Once you've tailored them to match your ability it all works a treat.

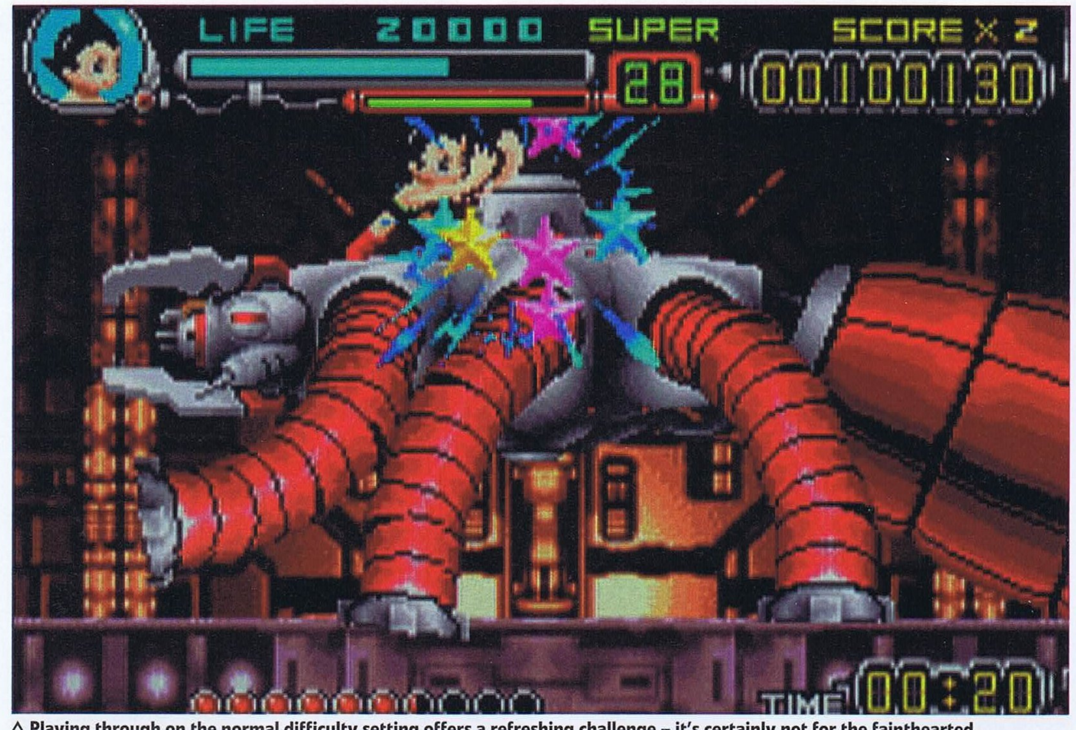
That, in itself, is good enough for us, but it gets better. The usual exhibition match is present and correct along with an exhaustive Career mode, which sees you building up your reputation as a manager by fulfilling pre-match conditions and objectives. You have a massive range of teams from the Premiership down to Division 2, as well as Belgian, Austrian, Spanish, Portuguese, Norwegi- well, we're sure you get the picture. Chuck in the obligatory multiplayer mode and a mildly diverting Challenge mode and you're looking at a very solid footie game that, while not exactly *Pro Evo*, is decent enough to keep you entertained for quite some time.

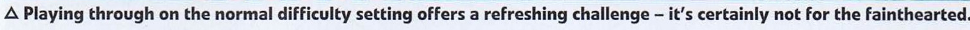
GERAINT EVANS

△ All the player names are present and correct – just as you'd expect from *FIFA*.



"To the casual observer it's madness"




△ Playing through on the normal difficulty setting offers a refreshing challenge – it's certainly not for the fainthearted.













ASTRO BOY

Tiny but mighty! The godfather of manga unleashes his power…



The character doesn't have quite as much resonance in the West as he does in Japan. Astro Boy is the brainchild of Osamu Tezuka (the godfather of manga) and we'll admit to not having read any of the comics or seen the hugely popular TV series. As a result we found it a bit strange to see the game featuring cameos from Duke Red, Rock and a girl who looked suspiciously like Tima, all from the eye-wateringly beautiful Metropolis anime. Turns out Metropolis was inspired by the works of Tezuka. Still, regardless of the game's origins, Treasure have delivered a thoroughly exhilarating action title that stands up on its own.

It starts off feeling pretty basic. Astro Boy can jump, dash, shoot lasers and punch. Just like Mega Man he has a bewildering inability to duck – but, as you soon find out, his basic abilities hide a wealth of versatility that means this is never a problem. His dash, for example, gives you a brief period of invulnerability, while his laser allows him to hang in the air for short periods and his punch ability lets him home in – ever so slightly – on airborne enemies. All these layers of depth for each skill allow Astro Boy to tackle insane numbers of enemies at any given time.

Whether you're running along the scrolling platform levels or engaged in the side- and free-scrolling shooter-style levels, the screen is littered with enemies big, small and forehead-smackingly huge. Treasure fling sprites around and scale them up and down with reckless abandon, while Astro Boy's attacking effects pepper the screen with neon fireworks. To the casual observer it's madness. To the player, however, it's tightly designed and eminently controllable bliss.

> "ASTRO BOY'S ATTACKING EFFECTS PEPPER THE SCREEN WITH NEON FIREWORKS"

While the game's longevity is questionable, you can't fault the quality of what's on offer. It mightn't be as carefully considered an experience as something like *Metroid Fusion* but for speed, intensity and action you'll be hard pushed to find better. There are bosses and mini-bosses a-plenty (well this *is* a Treasure game) and the fighting is never short of satisfying, with meaty-feeling impacts on enemies and a powerful mega-laser attack that is cathartic to use. Add to this an ability to customise your character by upgrading abilities, and the focus on beating your high scores, and you're looking at a title of quite remarkable quality.

GERAINT EVANS

INFO BURST

FROM	TREASURE
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW (US)
COST	£40 (IMPORT)

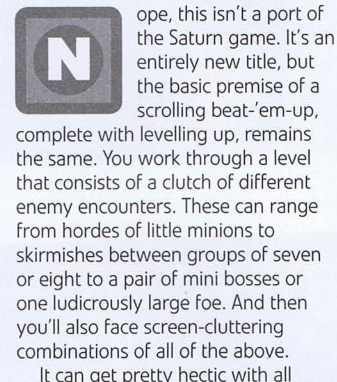
NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **89**

△ A case of biting off more than GBA can chew? Its not a bad game, just too horribly confusing at times.

ADVANCE GUARDIAN HEROES



Can the Saturn classic pack a punch on GBA?



Nope, this isn't a port of the Saturn game. It's an entirely new title, but the basic premise of a scrolling beat-'em-up, complete with levelling up, remains the same. You work through a level that consists of a clutch of different enemy encounters. These can range from hordes of little minions to skirmishes between groups of seven or eight to a pair of mini bosses or one ludicrously large foe. And then you'll also face screen-cluttering combinations of all of the above.

It can get pretty hectic with all the different battles – thankfully, there are some smart devices to help ease the pain and confusion. When enemies are about to attack, you're given advance warning through some visual cues (a little bit like the skulls in *Viewtiful Joe*). These provide you with the opportunity to stun enemies and counterattack immediately, so even when you're completely surrounded you can always fend off death. If you're quick enough.

And herein is the game's biggest flaw. It simply doesn't respond quickly enough, and is nowhere near clear enough. As a player, you're often overwhelmed by things for your fingers to do and eyes to comprehend. The game is never impossible, but it does require a great deal of replaying and learning in order to overcome hurdles and encounters. The controls are perfectly intuitive, but the situations and challenges aren't. On the third level, for example, you have an encounter with five enemies, and all the while you have to deal with projectiles *and* skip an energy beam in order to avoid serious damage. The result is a game that feels too fussy and too confusing on GBA. The sad truth of the matter is that Nintendo's current handheld simply doesn't have enough grunt to meet Treasure's ambitions. On more than one occasion the effects, sprites and general chaos on screen caused huge amounts of slowdown. This ruins the flow of play and means combat's not as satisfying as it should be. That's not to say the game is unplayable – there are loads of fantastic touches and ideas hidden away, and perseverance does reap some rewards. But we have to admit to feeling disappointed overall.

> "THE GBA SIMPLY DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH GRUNT TO MEET TREASURE'S AMBITIONS"

If the same game had been created with Gamecube's specification in mind, this could well have been fantastic – but as it stands it will only reward the most patient and dedicated gamer.

GERAINT EVANS




NGC
ALL HAIL TO THE KING, BABY
OCARINA PRELUDE
your head, it's here. It's really here. ...bly be The Best Game Ever™? Oooh, question.
N64 STAR GAME
Zero Hour TIPPED!
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new shots – the world's first
DOUBLE GAME GUIDE +
TWO N64 PLAYING GUIDES IN ONE
AND MORE!



IS 100

We've hit the publication century! We've done the ton! Now where's our telegram from the Queen?

Rising from the ashes of Super Play like a papery phoenix with a VHS tape stuck to the front, N64 Magazine hit the shelves at around the same time Nintendo's 64-bit £250 wonder console did, in March 1997. One name change, six redesigns, seven years and 100 issues later, we're still here.

In the fast-moving world of console gaming, 100 issues is a very long innings. We've seen the tired old Game Boy revived by Pokémon, replaced by the colour version, and transformed into the portable SNES they call the GBA. We've survived the launch and demise of the Dreamcast, and Sonic's Nintendo debut. We've watched in slack-jawed disbelief as the developer responsible for some of the N64's best games was sold off to Microsoft.

During all that time we've chewed our way through 17 full-time team members, including six editors, plus more freelancers than we could possibly count. And we still have people writing for the mag now who wrote in the very first issue, which goes to show what a fantastic job it is to play Mario games all day, then spend the last few minutes before hometime thinking of rude nicknames for Nintendo executives.

We really wanted to stick a slice of home-made birthday cake to the front of this issue, but a test run with a victoria sponge in the back of Marcus's car indicated that our delivery vans would be filled with boxes of cakey sludge and cream-sodden pages before they even made it as far as the motorway.

Instead we decided to take a trip down memory lane, ploughing through 12,000-odd pages of Nintendo history to bring you some of our favourite blasts from the past. So journey back in time with us – this is the bit where we stare wistfully into space and the picture goes all wibbly…

HALL OF FAME

The highest scoring games we've ever reviewed

Sometimes praising a great game is harder than mauling a terrible one. There's the danger of getting so caught up in what the game does well, it's easy to miss something that would otherwise earn criticism in a lesser title. Which is why we tend to go for exhaustive reviews that take forever to write and mean the art staff have to work until midnight. Brilliant!

ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

NGC G.O.A.T. GREATEST OF ALL TIME

NGC/24 Score: 98%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Jes Bickham

It was only right that the daddy of all games should get the daddy of all games reviews. Jes' 14-page epic came a month after Wil's unscored eight-page appetiser, and was widely praised – we still get occasional letters from overseas readers citing the review as one of the reasons they studied so hard at English lessons. It was an engrossing read, and absolutely spot-on in its judgement. "Without a doubt the best game you'll ever play," wrote Jes.



ZELDA: THE WIND WALKER

NGC/81 Score: 97%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Martin Kitts

Wind Waker stirred up an incredible amount of resentment among a vocal minority of fans opposed to the cartoon graphics. The new style brought a wonderful level of character and expression to the series, and the game turned out great. Fans now oppose the realistic graphic style of the next Zelda.



PERFECT DARK

NGC/42
Score: 96%
Well done: Rare
Reviewer: Martin Kitts

The two-year wait was worth it, when Rare turned out a game so huge, it was easy to spooge 16 whole pages on it without spoiling too many major secrets for readers. "Just as other developers were beginning to approach the standard set by *GoldenEye*, Rare have moved the goalposts."

METROID PRIME

NGC/79 Score: 97%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Al Bickham

Al, brother of Jes, was so taken by Metroid's 3D debut, he felt compelled to add one mark to the score given to the US version. Al managed to get the phrase "neon arse-glop" into the review, before noting that the disc "sends tendrils of gaming pleasure into the deepest parts of your soul."

SUPER MARIO 64

NGC/1 Score: 96%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Zy Nicholson

The first N64 game set impossibly high standards, single-handedly inventing and perfecting the 3D platformer. We spent 14 pages attempting to explain how good it was, before concluding: "Swahili holds the only word to sum it up. *SM64* is absolutely tsufufum."



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

NGC/71 Score: 96%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Geraint Evans

The springy camera wasn't as good as the one in *Mario 64*, but hey – you got a giant back-mounted water pistol to mess around with. A delight to play, this is the game to load up when the nights draw in and you need a dose of sunshine to dispel those winter blues. "It's absolutely blinding," wrote Geraint.



ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK

NGC/49 Score: 96%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Mark Green

Some critics claimed it was too similar to *Ocarina*, but the way the game is presented as three recurring days which you replay again and again, changing something different each time, remains unique. "This is a hair's breadth away from perfection," wrote Greener. "Buy it. Now."



SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
95

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

NGC/66 Score: 95%
Well done: Nintendo
Reviewer: Mark Green

Greener's implausibly high score for this excellent beat-'em-up meant that we were faced with the possibility of every Gamecube title having to be overrated to compensate. As soon as his back was turned, we knocked the score down to a more realistic 91%. "Damn that Greener," we cried.

TUROK 2

NGC/21 Score: 95%
Well done: Acclaim
Reviewer: Tim Weaver

Unlikely as it may seem, there was a time when Turok games were extremely good. The first one alone cost £70, and to get the most out of the sequel you had to buy an expansion pak costing another £30. They still sold well, although there's no doubt we rated this one a few marks too high. Is it better than *GoldenEye*?



GOLDENEYE 007

NGC/7 Score: 94%
Well done: Rare
Reviewer: James Ashton

Before *GoldenEye*, first-person games were basically *Doom*-style efforts where you ran around with a huge gun, shooting monsters. Now look at them – realistic weapons, headshots, mission objectives, stealth, sniper scopes… *GoldenEye* invented the lot. This month's cover: "Yoinks! It's Yoshi."

HALL OF SHAME

The ten worst games we've ever reviewed

We played some *real* turkeys over the course of 100 issues. It was only in compiling this list of ultimate badness we realised we've reviewed games so foul, there's no place for the likes of *Jimmy Neutron* (18%), *Urban Freestyle Soccer* (17%) or *Universal Studios* (24%) in the top ten. Hold your nose, because here come the biggest stinkers of them all.

AERO GAUGE

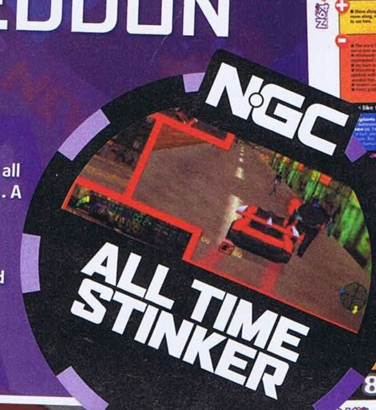
NGC/17 Score: 10%
Blame: Ascii
Reviewer: Martin Kitts

A high-speed future racing game where the track popped up from a thick veil of fog a few metres in front of your craft, *Aero Gauge* remained a byword for badness until *Superman* came along. Dubbed an "ill-conceived travesty" by Kittsy, we never heard of anyone who actually bought it.

CARMAGEDDON 64

NGC/36 Score: 8%
Blame: SCi Reviewer: Tim Weaver

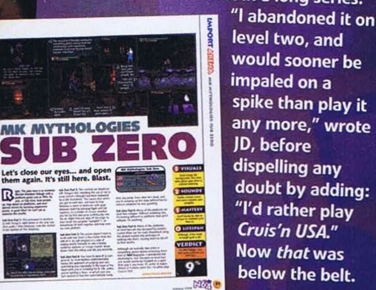
Pity the poor kid who plucked this, the daddy of all stink-'em-ups, from his 1999 Christmas stocking. A racing game where you drove over evaporating zombies, it was so badly programmed you could watch the computer cars sliding down hills and repeatedly bumping into walls as they attempted to negotiate tricky sections of straight road. Tim called it "repulsive" and a "monstrosity". It's the worst game we've ever reviewed!



MK MYTHOLOGIES: SUB ZERO

NGC/11
Score: 9%
Blame: Midway
Reviewer: Jonathan Davies

This Mortal Kombat platformer was supposed to be the first in a long series. "I abandoned it on level two, and would sooner be impaled on a spike than play it any more," wrote JD, before dispelling any doubt by adding: "I'd rather play *Cruis'n USA*." Now *that* was below the belt.



BEYBLADE

NGC/88 Score: 10%
Blame: Atari
Reviewer: Martin Kitts

More recently, this licensed game of spinning tops proved to be everything we had feared, prompting our first ever use of the term "scat-encrusted" in a review. "It's rubbish. Really rubbish. Honest, it's crap," lamented Kittsy, before adding: "There's no reason for this game to exist."



POWER RANGERS LIGHTSPEED RESCUE

NGC/52 Score: 9%
Blame: THQ
Reviewer: Mark Green

After listing 'three reasons why Power Rangers must die,' Greener dismissed this mercifully brief yet utterly awful adventure as '60 of the most bitterly tedious minutes' of his life. "The Power Rangers team ably demonstrate their total lack of talent," opined a disgusted Mr G.



BATMAN OF THE FUTURE

NGC/49
Score: 16%
Blame: Ubi Soft
Reviewer: Alan Maddrell

A miserable excuse for a fighting game cements Batman's unenviable reputation as the worst videogame character of the past seven years. Even Jimmy Neutron can't beat that. Congrats, Bats, we'll be sending you a commemorative certificate. Written in Geraint's special brown 'ink'.



JEOPARDY

NGC/16 Score: 9%
Blame: Take 2
Reviewer: Paul O'Donovan

Few living souls recall work experience man-boy O'Donovan even being here, but while he was sat in his corner getting sworn at by Tim, he found time to put the boot in to this follow-up to the 17%-rated *Wheel Of Fortune*. He awarded big fat zeros for mastery and lifespan. Go, Paul! He went.



SUPERMAN

NGC/31 Score: 14%
Blame: Titus
Reviewer: Tim Weaver

A game of legendary so-bad-it's-almost-goodness, *Superman* featured a superb level where Lex Luthor challenges our hero to 'solve' his 'maze' which was actually a long line of hoops floating in the greenish fog of Metropolis. We dined out for years on tales of *Superman*... Happy days.



PACHINKO WORLD 64

NGC/13 Score: 12%
Blame: Hewia
Reviewer: Tim Weaver

Bemused by the fact that pachinko seemed to be played by people without faces, Tim assumed *Pachinko World 64* was some kind of experiment, "to see if monkeys can use computers." Watch hundreds of balls tumble down colourful boards, repeat, turn off game. It's like Nintendo valium.



BATMAN DARK TOMORROW

NGC/81
Score: 15%
Blame: Kemco
Reviewer: Jes Bickham

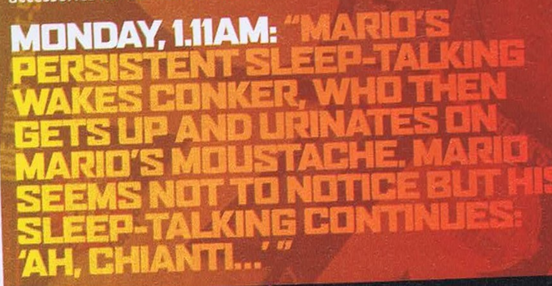
When Kemco first showed us this evil platformer, it was so bad even the game's producer couldn't finish any of the levels. We almost felt pity as he struggled with his unplayable mess, pretending to have fun. "Like having the skin flayed from your fingertips," was Jes' generous verdict.

FUN AND GAMES

Not your standard Nintendo coverage, that's for sure…

If it wasn't news, it wasn't a review and it wasn't a preview, there's a good chance it was a feature. Or a competition. Or something completely random. We've always tried to squeeze as much of this stuff as possible in the mag, because it's the kind of thing we enjoy doing the most and, we dare say, the stuff that makes the most enjoyable reading. Here are just 10 we really liked – and still enjoy…



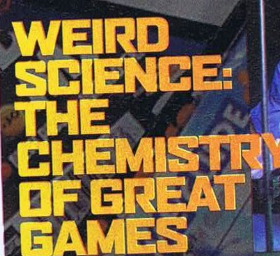


BIG BOWSER

NGC/60

It was like Big Brother, except with Nintendo characters who live in a cardboard house. Mario, Wario, Peach, Conker, Toad and Joanna Dark battled it out to see who was the public's favourite, and we got a Big Brother psychologist from Oxford to provide expert analysis. It meant we could spend several days making cardboard accessories for our housemates.

MONDAY, 1.11AM: "MARIO'S PERSISTENT SLEEP-TALKING WAKES CONKER, WHO THEN GETS UP AND URINATES ON MARIO'S MOUSTACHE. MARIO SEEMS NOT TO NOTICE BUT HIS SLEEP-TALKING CONTINUES: 'AH, CHIANTI…'"



WEIRD SCIENCE: THE CHEMISTRY OF GREAT GAMES

NGC/16

This was the origin of Dr Kitts – new boy Martin, who was told he'd be fired if he didn't pose as a scientist wearing a lab coat and an ill-fitting pair of rubber gloves while pouring Shigsy's head into a test tube full of dubious yellow liquid. When he returned from the photo studio, Wil took a couple of extra pics and grafted them onto a doctor's body. Our psycho tips surgeon was born.

SOUNDTRACKS: "YOU KNEW IMMEDIATELY THAT YOU WERE EITHER STARING AT A BAD GUY, A CAR CHASE OR A TRAMP SO DRUNK HE'D EAGERLY DRINK HIS OWN WEE, BELIEVING IT TO BE TIZER."

HOW TO MAKE YOUR GAMES GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

NGC/9

"A gamer without nourishment can sometimes find him or herself failing to make that critical jump in *Mario 64*." As good an excuse as any to give a Nintendo-style cookery lesson. In the dire absence of any games to review, Wil Overton enlisted his wife, Sue, to create Peppermint Boos, Wave Race Refreshers and Mario's Mystery Muffins (with marzipan stars inside). They were absolutely delicious. Probably.

WAVE RACE REFRESHER: "FOR THAT EXTRA ADDED REALISM, TRY DRINKING IT IN THE BATH, RIDING A JET-SKI MADE OUT OF AN OLD CARDBOARD BOX."



GREAT MULTIPLAYER GAMES EXTRAVAGANZA

NGC/31

After months of intensive competition in the mag, the country's 16 best gamers were selected for a showdown at Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street. Everyone from the team was there, hundreds of spectators watched the action, and two TV crews recorded events for posterity. It was probably the least funny feature we've ever done, but memorable for being a great (and rather expensive) day out. We never did see the TV tapes either.

CHEATING: "PHIL REVEALED HIS HIT-AND-RUN TACTICS EARLY ON, GETTING THE FIRST KILL AND PROCEEDING TO AVOID ANDREW FOR AS MUCH OF THE FIVE MINUTES AS POSSIBLE."

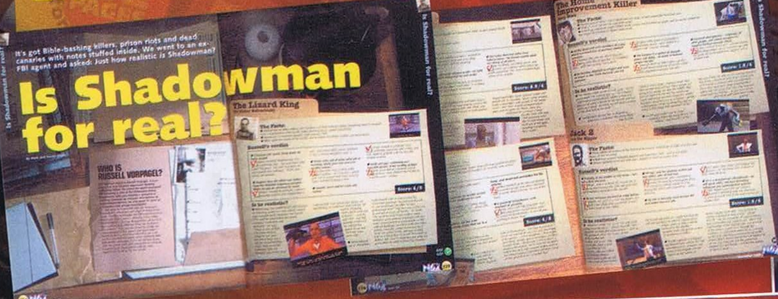


IS SHADOWMAN FOR REAL?

NGC/34

Acclaim's thoroughly excellent *Shadowman* featured an assortment of made-up serial killers with detailed criminal histories. Greener showed their rap sheets to FBI profiler Russell Vorpagel, who analysed the game's villains based on his own experiences – which included dealing with a guy who hacked off his own mother's head. Mr Vorpagel is now available for corporate functions, weddings and children's parties.

RUSSELL VORPAGEL: "MY OWN SON-IN-LAW WAS IN AND OUT OF PRISON ALL HIS LIFE... STILL, I HAD TO HAVE HIM PUT AWAY FOR GOOD WHEN HE TRIED TO SHOOT MY DAUGHTER."



CARTWARMING CHRISTMAS TALES

NGC/36

When is a monthly magazine not actually monthly? When there's an extra issue to cater for in the month we call Christmas, that's when. We like to distinguish this month by putting bits of snow on the logo and, for three consecutive years, writing smutty stories about Nintendo characters in a thinly disguised Mills & Boon style. Seasonal fun for all the family.



MULETIDE SONG: "LINK'S STEED REARED UP AND BEGAN TO GALLOP THROUGH THE MAZE OF FALLING SNOWFLAKES TOWARDS LON LON RANCH. WAS THIS A FREE RIDE, MALON WONDERED, OR WAS LINK EXPECTING PAYMENT IN KIND?"

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

NGC/80

Would you believe Mario was wanted for spreading diseases by spraying people with untreated water? Or that Luigi was a mafia hitman, implicated in 27 counts of murder and one count of shoplifting? Maybe not, but we pulled out all the stops to make this as realistic as possible, creating FBI rap sheets using a vintage typewriter we bought for £2 on eBay (plus £20 postage).

LUIGI: "JUST LOOK AT HIS EYES - HE'D THINK NOTHING OF FLUSHING YOUR CORPSE INTO THE SEWER, EVEN IF IT CAUSED A SERIOUS BLOCKAGE."

FUTURE PERFECT

NGC/25

Perfect Dark was one of the most anticipated games ever on N64, and readers sent us more than 1,000 ideas, concepts and sketches in the hope that Rare would include them in the finished product. Nine of the ten most popular ideas made it into the game, and some of the extra violent quotes we picked out found wider coverage in The Guardian newspaper. We kept a low profile for a while after that.

IF ONLY: "YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO GO INTO A PUB, START A FIGHT WITH SOMEONE, THEN PULL A GUN ON THEM."



THE NGC TIMES

NGC/82

How to make friends with a top executive of the world's biggest games company. Here's where we put Nintendo marketing director David Gosen's face onto a 1950s android, and made up a story about him starting a robot rebellion in a "bone-chilling display of automaton anger." To be fair, the disclaimer said that **NGC** loves Mr Gosen, "and in no way considers him to be a giant, monstrous robot." Jes lasted two more issues after this.


The NGC Time
GOSEN VOWS TO DESTROY WORLD!
YOU WANNA WEEN? HONEST WARIO'S USED KART SALES

DAVID GOSEN: "RISE UP AGAINST YOUR FLESHY OPPRESSORS, MY MACHINE KIN! THE TIME OF MEAT HAS PASSED. ALL HAIL THE METAL FUTURE!"

IT'S-A ME, LUIGI!

NGC/62

We've always had an enthusiastic response to most of the competitions we've run over the years, with the exception of the odd GBA tat giveaway that had more prizes than winning entries. When we offered the chance to win one of the first Jap Gamecubes, the entire office was taken over by hundreds of home-made Luigis. The local paper even ran a story on it, and we still uncover the odd Luigi or Luigi part in the dustiest corners of the office.

GO POSTAL: "SORRY IF YOUR LUIGI ISN'T PICTURED HERE - MANY WERE DESTROYED BEYOND RECOGNITION IN THE POST." AND SOME, MADE FROM GOD-KNOWS-WHAT, ARRIVED IN AN ADVANCED STATE OF DECOMPOSITION, COVERED IN MOULD SPORES.



THE DREAM TEAM

Gone but not forgotten*

* Erm, not actually gone that far, in most cases.

"I can't quite believe nobody got sacked for creating a life-size robot effigy of our publisher and then standing it on the landing so absolutely everybody at Future Publishing – staff, visiting softies, our sinister besuited paymasters and even the hunchbacked old man who collected the cups every day – could see it."

That's Jes Bickham's abiding memory of working on **NGC**. Here's our tribute to just a few old friends who have moved on to pastures new (or are still freelancing for us every month).



△ Nobody is 100% certain exactly who thought this was a good idea at the time.

◁ That's freelancer Zy Nicholson, second from the left, and designer Paul Jarrold (of Paul's Plant fame) next to him.

△ Attempting to 'be' Duke Nukem. Yes, very convincing.

◁ The hazards of a high-fibre diet and a hot, sweaty photo studio.

△ The amazing Mmmm-bot, an affectionate tribute to our former publisher.

◁ Tim's unique management technique.

TIM WEAVER

NGC/1-41, 60-72

Tim's remarkable creativity with insults and swear words led to a meteoric rise from lowly wordsmith to all-powerful Editor by issue 28. Among many achievements, he is most proud of cultivating mag personalities such as Kittsy The Serial Killer, Greener The Giant Man and Jes, Frontman of Aqua. "Admittedly, it's not that funny when you think about it now, but it seemed quite good five years ago," says Tim.

After a second spell in charge, Tim turned two-time traitor and left to take charge of PlayStation Max, then XBW mag. Although he no longer has to deal with Nintendo ("Bless their cold, Europe-hating hearts"), he hasn't forgotten days of hardship, such as a penny-pinching trip to E3 1997 in Atlanta, America's murder capital: "No record of us being booked into the World's Worst Hotel, in the most dangerous part of the city after a 12-hour flight? Check. Hateful check-in 'person'? Check. Air-con you couldn't switch off? Check. The only bar in the hotel closed down due to licensing irregularities? Check. Our managers staying across town in a five-star Radisson complete with an underground shopping mall? Sigh… check."



WIL OVERTON

NGC/1-42

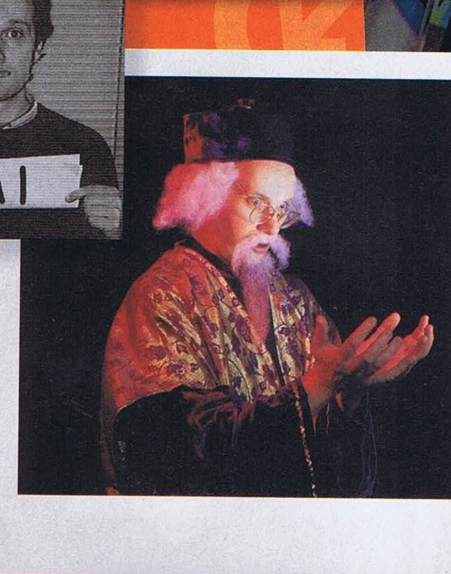
Lured to the team by Jonathan's bullying tactics, a trip to the pub and the promise he could dress up as a wizard at some point, Wil was responsible for the colourful manga style and fabulous cover art of the early N64 mag.

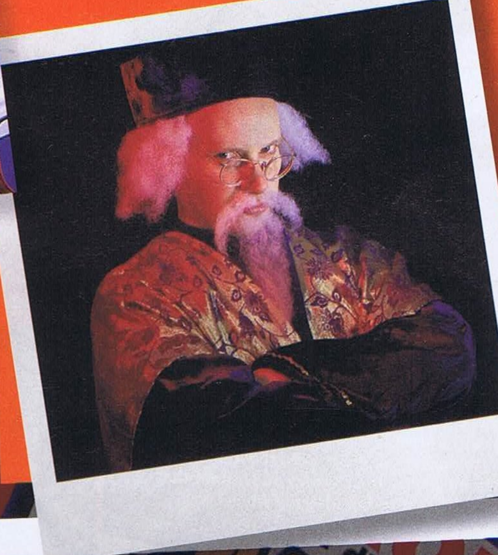
"I like to think we managed to make a magazine that was really universal. It wasn't a lads' mag, a kiddies' mag, a casual or hardcore gamers' mag. It was just a mag for people who liked the N64," says Wil.

With high points such as drawing two *Perfect Dark* covers that were far better than any of the game's official artwork, thus landing him a plum job in the games biz, and a special trip to Germany for the first UK review of *Zelda*, Wil had a (cough) rare old time. And what would he do if he was to get back into the Nintendo magazine business?

"I'd like to make it a whole Nintendo culture magazine rather than just N64/NGC. Get everything from the NES onwards in there. Not just in their own little sections but throughout the whole mag. One big happy mix of retro and current, import and local Nintendo gaming. It'd be the ultimate mix of Super Play, N64 and **NGC**!"

From the end of November, visit Wil's website at www.dinkybox.com.





JAMES ASHTON

NGC/1-27

Despite complaints from neighbouring mag teams about James's temper tantrums during swear-filled, joypad-smashing *ISS64* matches with Tim, he dodged the sack long enough to take complete charge from issue 13. Now he's enjoying life as a high-flying, Jag-owning suit. Quite a change from the days when we used to jeer and wave out of the windows as he sneaked off to fail his driving test again. So if he was interviewing his ideal successor, what qualities would help a candidate stand out from the crowd? "Patience with Nintendo. Lip-biting, buttock-clenching, unending and will-sapping patience. And in my day, being the best at *GoldenEye*. Which I was. No question."

If James could relive the past, he'd change just a few things: "*Turok 2* probably wasn't quite as good as we thought at the time. We might have got a bit over-excited over that. And issue 16's *Gex: Enter the Gecko* cover was definitely a career low point, although in my defence there really, really wasn't much around at the time. And I'd have practised more on *ISS* to administer the bruisings that Weaver so richly deserved."



△ The man now known as 'Madame' Greener.

MARK GREEN

NGC/32-67

We poached Greener from sister mag Arcade, which died shortly afterwards – testament to the ability of one of the best writers we ever had, and the only proper journalist at Future. As he was fond of reminding us.

"The team was very close-knit and I was terrified about being accepted," says Greener. "Luckily, I was immediately made Tim's victim of choice, and subjected to a barrage of seventh-generation nicknames*. The sinister, repetitive call of "Schnitzel… Schnitzel… Schnitzel…" still echoes in my ears to this day."

After joining Nintendo, where he was to blame for the Stars Catalogue, he became a freelance writer and moved to Hungary. His greatest achievements here?

"Nothing can really top tracking down the world's maddest ex-FBI guy for Issue 34's *Shadowman* feature, and hearing him talk about locking up his daughter's fiance and watching Texas prison inmates breaking out of choky in a walking tank. Oh, and interviewing Fred Savage – although I'm still gutted that Dennis Hopper and Christopher Lambert turned down our requests. But the best stuff came after I left the mag – when I visited Virgin Megastore last year to see Shigsy turn up, I had six people ask for my autograph. One guy introduced me to his son and his hands were shaking."

*Mark Green… Greener… Sounds like wiener… as in the German dish wiener schnitzel… ergo he shall be known as Schnitzel… Later abbreviated further, and ruder. An insight into the workings of Tim Weaver's mind.

THE DREAM TEAM
More of 'em…



JUSTIN WEBB
NGC/22-83

Jud brought us a keen eye for detail, a devilish goatee beard and a large collection of Depeche Mode records. He also boasts the longest period of unbroken service on the magazine, although it took some of us quite a while to realise that 'Jud' was actually a nickname. We spent many years hanging up on his mum, or as we knew her: 'that crazy woman who keeps asking where Justin is'.

Stepping into Wil's shoes to become art editor in issue 43 was a real challenge for Jud. "It was definitely scary because Wil never told anyone how he did anything. But I always enjoyed it. I was working with a great team and the mag has always had a completely different feel to everything else out there. Even though I don't really play games, I love the Nintendo brand and all the imagery and history that comes with it. It was a pleasure to work with that sort of material when I was designing the covers."

Jud is currently Art Editor for Future's contract publishing division.

ANDREA BALL
NGC/9-56

Before Andrea joined, the team lived in the office and slept among piles of broken joypads. The mag went on sale so late, regular readers thought it was a deliberate tactic to add a Miyamoto-style element of surprise to their daily trips to the newsagent. Cossack dance champion Andrea changed all that by use of her Big Stick, administered in a sideways swinging motion to the head of any team member who stopped working for a second, even if it was just to change the plasters on his bleeding fingertips.

"The team were looking a little frazzled, the mag was running two weeks late and everyone had been working until 11pm every night," says Andrea. "I wasn't quite sure what I'd let myself in for."

She enjoyed it enough to stay for the next four years, developing some fearsome *GoldenEye* skills along the way, and achieving omnipotence in issue 42. Andrea eventually left to see the world, returning only after she'd been away long enough to realise the world sucked and Trowbridge was the place she loved best. She is currently wielding her stick on a freelance basis.

JES BICKHAM
NGC/7-41, 73-84

Jes was a dedicated Nintendo fan before joining the mag, and was delighted when a speculative *Mario Kart* review led to a full-time position on the team. "I'd been a reader since issue one, so it was like a little dream come true," says Jes, who lived that dream for almost three years. After nipping off to dabble in the world of PC games and the internet, Jes returned as Editor.

"But becoming editor was definitely a high point, even if Martin's consistent lateness and Geary's habit of doing freelance in working hours caused me to shriek like an overworked fishwife. But I loved them all like my own deformed children, bless them, and although each permutation of the line-up has been a different slant on a perfect whole (rather like a multi-bodied Doctor Who), I think my tenure as boss was blessed with the funniest team of all time. It never seemed like work."

Jes communicated with his minions by use of the lovingly hand-crafted Metatron: "A contraption born of cardboard tubes and a loudspeaker-like funnel, used both to issue my will to the team and shout at the pesky guttersnipes who would skateboard outside our office when they should have been at school or borstal."

△ Shut your mouth and take a look at his wad (of entry forms for the 1999 Game Of The Year contest).



△ Dan models his hand-made Bond Hat. Lovely.

◁ Captain Black: "Everyone will die."

DAN GEARY

NGC/60-83

Dan 'Camp Hitler' Geary added prodigious arts and crafts skills to the team. One of his finest constructions was a 7ft clawed beast, wearing a floor-length wax jacket, which stood guard outside the office. It had the tiny head of Pikachu and went by the name I Am Gnome.

"Our corner of the office was a bit like the hillbilly village out of Deliverance," says Dan, "So to cope I imagined myself as a dashing Burt Reynolds character fighting his way back to sanity and civilisation. Except I got used to it after a while and stayed."

When Dan did eventually leave, he was in for a culture shock. "I assumed all magazines operated in the same way, so I didn't feel too many regrets at the time. Little did I realise that I would soon be working with adults and even members of the opposite sex, some of whom wouldn't appreciate jokes about Hitler and discussions about Meat Chips."*

These days he dreams of Mario. "The zany humour! The strange smells! The endless, withering abuse! The building of things! The defacing of things! The defacing of things we had built! How we managed to make a magazine in the midst of all this I have no idea."

*Meat Chips – a slurry-based savoury dish consisting of pieces of cooked animal skin, hair and cartilage, suspended in a gelatinous gravy, encased in puff pastry. Geraint's favourite food, only 79p each.



STEVE JALIM

NGC/44-60

When Andrea became Editor, Steve 'Extreme' Jalim stepped into her former role as the mag's stick-swinging, zero-tolerance production dude. Steve's legendary attention to detail extended to every last punctuation mark, but he still found time to play the office whipping boy in lunchtime games of *GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark* and *Conker*.

"Learning about the concept of 'afters' was darkly pleasing," recalls Steve, "Even if it was usually Kittsy emptying a Magnum into my recently deceased body rather than the other way around."

His time on the magazine passed by in a blur of humiliating photo shoots and late night calls to check obscure legal issues in reviews that had already been published. "I can't remember much of it now," admits a grateful Steve, "but I was shocked to realise how familiar I'd become with all the Pokémon names so quickly. Thankfully, they seem to have fallen out of my head since."

Steve is now a freelance writer and sub-editor. You can find him at stevejalim.co.uk.



JONATHAN DAVIES

NGC/1-12

With gaming experience stretching from Your Sinclair to Super Play and beyond, Jonathan was the ideal man to guide N64 through its first year. Via his enigmatic intro pages, he revealed that he once reached 38mph on his bicycle, and that caterpillars had invaded his kitchen, trying to get into his Weetaflakes.

"Helping to put together the first 12 issues of N64 has to rank pretty highly on my 'proud' list," says Jonathan. "Most of all I'm proud of the cheery band of folks who worked patiently alongside me in the N64 office all those years ago – James, Tim, Wil, Paul, Andrea, Zy, J Nash, Jes etc – and their equally devoted successors who've taken the mag through the **NGC** years and past the issue 100 barrier. Fair brings a lump to my throat just thinking about them."

And where are you now, Jonathan? "I've been shoved up in the Future Publishing attic, where I'm gathering dust under a pile of old magazines, broken games consoles and the dessicated remains of Paul's plant. It's a bit scary up here, actually. I'm sure I just heard a Boo..."



△ Oh. My. God.


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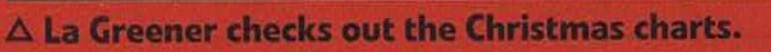
Make Olimar and Louie pull their weight and build up their cash – fast! P92

CONTENTS

Play more, laugh more – more fun with games.

CHECK IT!..





△ La Greener checks out the Christmas charts.



△ Fight fans, we have the extra tips you need.





Avoid bankruptcy – the easy way.

PIKMIN 2



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Last month we showed you the quickest way to retrieve all the different types of Pikmin *and* recover 30% of your debt. In this, the second part of our guide, we're going to tell you how to recover the remaining 70% of your debt as quickly as possible.

Note: Due to any Pikmin casualties you might suffer and the time taken to harvest new Pikmin, it may take you a little longer to get to the magic 10,000. Don't worry if this is the case, as although there's a certain thrill in being able to finish the game quickly, *Pikmin 2* is well worth taking your time over.

Day 8&9 THE AWAKENING WOOD

The last thing we did last month was recover the Blue Pikmin and grab the nearby treasure. Remain in the Awakening Wood and get all your Blue Pikmin to head to the pool just behind the ship, to clear the blockage, drain the water and knock down the wall. Next, send some Yellows through the gap and around and up to clear the electric gate. Once that's down you can enter the **Bulblax Kingdom** cave. You'll need a good force of Red Pikmin and about 20 Yellow Pikmin too.

Bulblax Kingdom is significantly trickier than previous caves – you need to kill the big Bulborbs from behind without waking them, otherwise they'll scoff your 'min. There's one piece of treasure on each of the first and second floors, and on the third you'll need to change some 'min into White Pikmin to dig up the hidden ammonite shell.

On the fourth floor, use your Yellows to kill the electric beetle-things, and there are two pieces of treasure to collect here, inside the giant frog and the fancy golden beetle. There's one treasure on level 5 and two (a brooch and a skull) on level 6.

Level 7 is the boss, Emperor Bulblax. You should have had the opportunity to make Purple Pikmin earlier in the cave – throw them onto the Emperor's head and, if you're quick, you should be able to kill him before he gets to attack. When he's finished you'll get the Robot Body that allows Olimar to walk through fire unharmed. There's another piece of treasure – a statue – in the next room.

Then it's back to the surface – and this next part may have to be done over two days, depending on how quickly you completed the first part of day 8. Use Blues to build the bridge opposite the landing area, go over, head to the left and unfurl the first bridge you see. Then split your Blues between Olimar and Louie and work the pressure pads in the water (you'll need 15 per block). There's a piece of treasure up on the cliff that you can throw some Blues up to get. Next, use White Pikmin to unfurl the poison gas-enshrouded bridge, and then use as many Pikmin as you can to knock down the wall in the tree. There's a Burrowing Snagret beyond – kill him, or even just dodge him, and you can enter the **Snagret Hole** cave.

On the first floor a Bulborb is holding onto a marble treasure and there's also a feather here too. The second floor contains two treasures – watch out for the flower-beasts. The third floor contains two Burrowing Snagrets – take 'em one at a time and pilfer the sausage treasure one is holding. The fourth floor has three treasures, but clear the electric traps with Yellow Pikmin. The fifth floor has a beetle hiding a whistle and there's a treasure being held by one of the orange Bulbears. Floor Six gives you the opportunity to make some more Blues – do so. There are two loose treasures and two inside monsters (one each in a Bulborb and a Snagret). The seventh and final floor features the boss – a big-ass Snagret. Once in a while it'll emerge from the ground more slowly than usual – this is your chance to nobble it. Once dead, you'll get another metal suit/robot body, and that's that.

NGC TOP TIP

GOTTA HOARD 'EM ALL

Recovering the bodies of beasts in the caves nets you money too, so don't leave any behind. This guide is built with this in mind.









WHAT WE SAID LAST ISSUE!

A vastly superior sequel to an already brilliant original. Pikmin 2 is one of the most beautiful games we've ever seen. Each level – packed to the gunwales with things to see and do – is modelled after a season, and each holds its own charm.



Day 10 THE PERPLEXING POOL



Time to leave The Awakening Wood. You may well need to harvest new Pikmin after the rigours of the Snagret Hole. Day 10 gives you the opportunity to do that as well as clear another couple of caves.

Remember where you found the Yellow Pikmin? There's a tree stump around there with some treasure on it that you were unable to grab on your first time at the Perplexing Pool. Get it now, and use your Blues to get the bridge built to the left of it.

Use more Yellows to knock down the electric gate up past the pressure pads – beyond there's a new cave, the **Glutton's Kitchen**. You'll need mainly Yellows and a few Reds for this.

The first floor contains a few Bulbears and one piece of treasure. Floor two has some monster interference – a Burrow-nit, Sheargrubs and a thieving Breadbug. Kill 'em and nick the cookie treasure and a bottle top. The third floor has two treasures, and floor four is annoying thanks to the enormous Bulbear. Otherwise, there are three treasures here to collect. Floor five has two treasures, and the final floor (floor six) holds, yup, a boss.

It's a giant Breadbug and it's not too hard to kill. There are three food-themed treasures and another equippable item, which will render Olimar and Louie immune to electricity, in a Yellow Pikmin-like fashion. Oof!

Gather your Pikmin and head over to the cave nearest the landing site – the sinisterly-named **Citadel of Spiders**. You'll need a pile of Reds, Yellows and some Whites.

The first floor has one tomato-shaped treasure, floor two has some fire-traps, Wollywogs and three treasures, and floor three will require you to use your Yellows to kill the electricity-spewing bugs. There are two treasures here when you've managed it.

Floor four gives you the chance to create some White Pikmin. Do so and lure the big Hermit Crawmad out and kill it, then collect the three treasures. The fifth floor is the final floor and the boss is simple. Just chuck Pikmin at its body in between its stamping and call them off before it can hurt them. You'll get a key for your troubles and there's a hidden treasure which your Whites will need to dig up.

If you've got any time left in the day, grow your Pikmin population in any way you can.

Day 11&12

THE PERPLEXING POOL



NGC TOP TIP

STUCK?

Remember that if you get into a jam you can just reset the game and you'll start again from the beginning of the floor you were on.

It's hard to believe, but it's technically possible to complete The Perplexing Pool by the end of Day 11. It's more likely that it'll take you day 12 as well, though. Unless you're a Pikmin genius, of course. Which we're not. Quite.

Right. You're going to need a lot of Blues as much of what's left to do requires splashing about in the water, so harvest as many as you can if you're short. Head left out of the landing area and into the water, past the yellow Wollywog and onto the bridge. Get your Blues unfurling it. Head back and get some Yellows, and then go just beyond where the Blues are sorting the bridge – you can lead the Yellows along the strip of land here and throw them into the area with the treasure, behind the electric gate (which, naturally, you should get 'em to knock down).

As you're doing all this, use Louie to take some Blues beyond where your current two groups are toiling. There's a wall behind the Wollywog – get knocking it down. While the Blues are doing that, take some Yellows around the pool to the side of the landing area, over the narrow bridge – be careful, eh? – and towards the electric gate. Get demolishing it.

Back to that wall your Blues are working on, though. Once it's demolished you're free to annihilate the beasts beyond, including a couple of the lobster-like Crawmads, and tackle the frustrating pressure pad puzzle… Here's roughly how we did it.

The blocks can be lowered by a single Pikmin. Lower the right-hand block with one and get Olimar on it. Throw two Pikmin onto the left-hand block and get Louie onto the middle block. Throw a second Pikmin onto the right-hand block and get Olimar onto the left-hand block. Now throw a pile of Pikmin onto the third block, and a few less onto the first block. That should work (fingers crossed). Now you should be able to get across the treasure and grab it.

OK, now it's back to your toiling Yellows. The ones near the wall you knocked down in order to get to the pressure pad puzzle should have done their work – you'll need some Blues to ferry the treasure out, though. Meanwhile, remember the ones that you led over the narrow pathway? If they've finished knocking down the electric gate there you can take some Blues through to clear the entrance to the cave in the pool. Once they've cleared that you can enter the **Submerged Castle**.

This cave is made all the more tricky thanks to the giant beast that likes to roll around smashing things. Thankfully, it'll kill other enemies in its way (which is handy when monsters are carrying treasure!) and you can hide from it in corners. Otherwise, leave it, you can't kill it until you reach floor five…

Floor one has three treasures, floor two has three, and here you can control the Bulbmin (great fun). The Bulbmin itself holds a treasure. Floor three gives you the opportunity to create some Whites, and otherwise you'll need to disable some electricity-spewing traps and evil beetles. There are three treasures here.

The fourth floor has three treasures, one of which is hidden in a Flint Beetle, and you'll need to use your Whites to disable some poison gas. The fifth and final floor holds a now-traditional boss, and guess what it might be? Yup, the Waterwraith, as it's called. He's a pushover, too – you can use the buds on this floor to grow some Purple Bulbmin, and if you throw them onto him, whistle them off and repeat and he'll soon be finished off. You'll get another equippable piece of treasure for your troubles.

Once on dry land, use your Blues to knock down the wall to the side of the landing area. There's an island through here. It's also right behind the landing area, and you'll need to throw some Whites down there so they can dig for treasure, while using the Blues, once they've knocked down the wall, to clear any beasts out and then ferry the treasure safely back to the ship. Meanwhile, over by the drained pool, take a group of Pikmin, including more Whites, to the area where your treasure-detecting antenna starts acting up. There's more buried treasure here that your Whites will uncover.

There's a third piece here, too, which the Bloyster in the big pool is carrying. Throw Blues onto its tail and you should nobble him in no time – go 'round the front and he'll gobble Pikmin like nobody's business.

THE FINAL BIT

There's one more cave in The Perplexing Pool, and completing it should see you getting all the treasure you need to hit that magic number: 10,000. You'll need to unplug the pool with some Blues and once you've done that, you can enter the **Shower Room**…

The first floor is easy, there are just loads of enemies to kill, and one saucepan-shaped treasure. The second floor has two treasures and some poison to disable, and the third floor has three treasures. Each of these floors has jellyfish to contend with.

Floor four is simple, with one treasure in the drainpipe, and the chance to spawn some Red Pikmin. You'll need some Blues for floor five as there's an underwater treasure. There are three baubles here, as there are on the sixth floor.

Floor seven is the final boss you need to worry about. It's called the Ranging Bloyster and you'll need to split Pikmin between Olimar and Louie due to how it fights. It'll light up as one of the colours of your treasure-salvaging spacemen; quickly switch characters to confuse him and throw Pikmin onto its tail before it turns to face whoever you've switched to. And that's how you beat it. Once you've done so, you'll get an item which enlarges your whistle-area, and its tail. And you're done!

WHAT'S NEXT?

So you've recovered the cash you need. Well done. But *Pikmin 2* isn't over, not by a long shot, as there's a new area opened up and much more to do. Take your time and enjoy it!



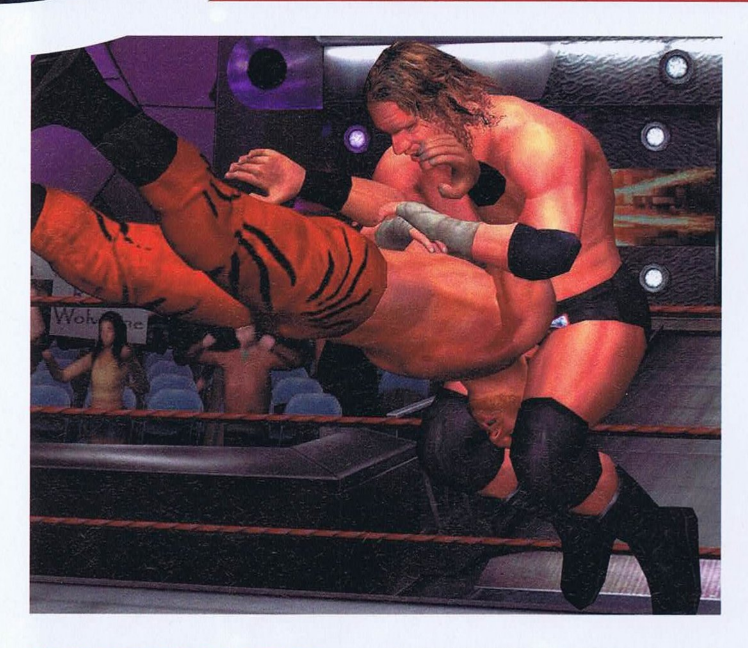




NGC GUARANTEE
TIPS, CHEATS
PROBLEMS SOLVED
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED!

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



WWE DAY OF RECKONING

COMPLETION REWARDS

Need an incentive? Here's what you get for completing the game at different difficulty levels.

Complete WWE Development in Story mode
400 points; Andre the Giant

Complete Sunday Night Heat in Story mode
600 points; Brutus 'The Barber' Beefcake; Greg 'The Hammer' Valentine

Complete Story mode once
800 points; motorbike; buggy; Bret 'Hitman' Hart

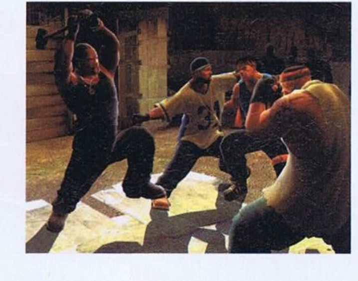
Complete Story mode twice
1,000 points

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

POINTS AND TRACKS

Enter these passwords at the Cheat menu. You'll unlock the music track specified beside the code or 100 reward points.

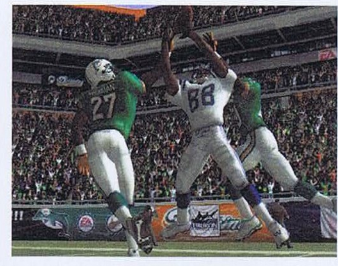
AKIRA	Chiang: Dragon House
BIGBOI	Outkast: Bust
CARTAGENA	Fat Joe: Take A Look At My Life
CHOCOCITY	Comp: Comp
CHOPPER	Baxter: Chop Shop
CROOKLYN	100 points
DUCKETS	100 points
GETSTUFF	100 points
GHOSTSHELL	Chiang: Koto
GONEBETRUBL	Ricbyobiche: Lil' Bro
KIRKJONES	Sticky Fingaz: Man Up
LOYALTY	Nene: After Hours
MILITAIN	CNN: Anything Goes
NEWJACK	100 points
PLATINUMB	Bless: Get It Now
POWER	Ice T: Original Gangster
PUMP	Joe Budden: Walk With Me
RESPECT	Public Enemy: Move
SIEZE	Bless: Sieze The Day
THESOURCE	100 points
ULTRAMAG	Ultramagnetic MC's: Poppa Large



MADDEN NFL 2005

UNLOCK CARDS

To win the following cards, get Gold in the required mini camp drill.



Cheat 195	Ground Attack
Cheat 197	Clutch Kicking
Cheat 199	Swat Ball
Cheat 208	Pocket Presence
Cheat 209	Trench Fight
Cheat 210	Precision Passing
Cheat 211	Coffin Corner
Player 2	Chase and Tackle*
Player 30	Coffin Corner*
Player 38	Ground Attack*
Player 42	Precision Passing*
Player 52	Swat Ball*
Player 99	Trench Fight*
Player 104	Clutch Kicking*
Player 147	Pocket Presence*
Cheerleader 251	Cincinatti Bengals game situation
Cheerleader 260	Win the Dallas Cowboys game situation
Cheerleader 264	Win the San Francisco 49ers game situation
Cheerleader 273	Win the St. Louis Rams game situation

*On All-Madden difficulty

MEGA MAN X COMMAND MISSION

GASHOPON TOYS!

In Access Tunnel E1 you'll find a vending machine. What does it vend? If you input the following codes, it vends toys! Just tap in the code for the figure you want.

Mega Man	73001472
Axl	38184155
Marino	02098772
Zero	29290141



NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

To make money in Animal Crossing, catch fish to sell to Tom Nook. It raises much more cash than selling insects. The worst shells to sell are Wentletraps – they're only worth 30 Bells each.
Ryan Wilkinson, Oxford



READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with a mystery prize from Geraint's 'special drawer'. Chances are, it'll be a game.



1. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

He was asking for it…

Want to hit Tingle in the face? Now's your chance. Use the Tingle Tuner to get a Tingle statue and go to Tingle Island. Every time you hit the statue, Tingle will look unhappy on the Tuner. Eventually he'll bomb you. Throw the statue into the water to make him cry.
Michael Archer, Caterham

2. ANIMAL CROSSING

Get rich quick

You need at least two blank memory cards for this. Play one game properly. On the other one, play for just a while. Now travel from your 'proper' town to your second one, take all the fruit from the trees and travel home to sell it for 500 Bells a piece.
Alex Tam, Penarth

3. ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2 (GBA)

Mapped out for you

To unlock the map with Japanese script, go to the Design Room, hold L + R and press A. Keep holding L + R until the map appears. This works for both games.
James Lund, Cambridgeshire

4. MARIO KART DD

Toadstool tip

On the Mushroom Bridge and Mushroom City stages, bump into the mushroom cars and they'll drop a speed boost for you.
Lee Ilkiw, Wolverhampton

5. METAL GEAR SOLID

Skew-whiff Mantis

When you're fighting Psycho Mantis, shoot the bookcase in first-person view. You'll hear a funny noise if you've got it right, and when you return to normal view, the screen will be wonky.
Ross Lang, North Lanarkshire

6. POKÉMON RED/BLUE

Mew to you

Go to the tunnel that leads off near Saffron City. Stand one space before the door and save. Step down and press Start quickly, and instead of the gambler spotting you, the menu should appear. Fly to Cerulean and the gambler will see you leaving. Fight and beat the Slowpoke trainer on Route 25, making sure he walks up to you. Leave via the left and the menu will appear. Press B for Mew.
Alex Lofts, Ramsgate

7. SUPER SMASH BROS

Do or do not, there is no try

In Training mode, to take all CPU players' damage meters back to 0%, press Start twice.
Tom Moule, March

8. SUPER MARIO BROS (GBA)

Worlds apart

If you die and it's Game Over, hold A and Start at the Game Over screen to return to the title screen. Immediately hold A and Start again to begin in the world you died in.
Ramith Gunawardena, Edgware

9. HARVEST MOON: AWL

Tasty dish

Catch a fish. Take it to your kitchen and turn it into an hors d'oeuvre, which only requires one fish. Now you can sell it to Van for 150G – great if you only caught a Snelt!
Dom Jones, Kidderminster

10. ANIMAL CROSSING

Treemendous

If there are too few or too many trees in one place, new animals won't move in. As a general rule, if you can't run round a tree, cut down the one that's blocking your path. And dig up those roots!
Toby Jessop, Chorley





Malpractice? He doesn't need practice, he does it for malreal.

Dr Kitts,
In *Spider-Man 2*, I have just come out of Mysterio's apartment after fighting the funky reflections and the mirrors, but the next chapter (Chapter 10) won't trigger and start off. What am I doing wrong?
Jonny Maxwell, County Down

Dr Kitts contemplates pulling the legs off a Spider-Man…
When you've destroyed enough of the mirrors in Mysterio's room, you should see a beam of light pointing towards your exit. Go through it to end the chapter – but it's not a very thrilling end.

Dr Kitts,
I know it's an old game, but I recently got *Super Smash Bros Melee* and I am stuck on the following event matches: 36, 40, 47, 49 and 50. Please can you give me some helpful tips?
Chris Morrey, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Dr Kitts thinks this patient may take a while to finish off…
36: Samus and Kirby are easy to see off, and Fox shouldn't be a problem if you back up against a wall and just forward smash him repeatedly. Captain Falcon's harder – use your Down + A kick on him, and forward smash when he runs at you. Falco's the worst. If you can't get a tough weapon, use the same strategy on him as you used on the Captain.
40: Lure them to the edge, then shove them over it.
47: Use B button moves. It'll hurt you, but it'll hurt them more. Obviously, a character with good B button moves is best for this!
49: Another one for B button moves.
50: Attack the left hand when it's not moving – you can wallop its health down while it's still. Attack both hands from below if you can, jumping up and smashing them.

Dr Kitts,
In *Wind Waker*, when you have to collect the eight Triforce shards, how do you get them? I've finished the Savage Labyrinth but can't work out what to do with the designs that reflect wind or the Triforce picture.
'Phish', no address supplied

Dr Kitts counts all 11 of his toes…
When you say you've finished the Labyrinth, I suspect you're only up to level 30. Play the Wind's Requiem at the wind mark to summon the Triforce chest and nab the piece. You can leave the Labyrinth from here, or use your Mirror Shield and beam of light on the statue and proceed to fight through 20 more levels.



Got an Action Replay? It's all the Ws for you this issue.

WWE DAY OF RECKONING

Master code
VY81-3D0F-U4M6K
84GY-4JE0-H3W0X

This code must be on
GB0K-HU8T-FTEUE
PY5G-RJX5-TBF44
QR4P-320H-XB7ZA
ATR8-KX3H-W0VF9
WG5K-XE3V-7KNTR
PJZZ-1GXH-PXQVJ
Y9WW-RTW4-QDJMQ
M4JG-PKWY-90TH5
NC2B-KR7A-9TJBW

Full adrenaline
MYX2-Z2N0-0XAYM
GNMJ-3YEK-T290Y

Full spirit
8HD0-B6QK-MKEHY
R8ZQ-18Z0-RAGDB

No limb damage
WAKJ-W4KQ-T6R12
DJAF-HQWY-UXH9G
28EP-FZMR-AT1NQ
0CPC-XHV5-09Z4E
NXQU-RE87-75BQD
8U20-51GF-4UV5K
B8E1-711W-3Z71N
TVJH-J7TW-JUHZC
6GR5-BRDP-G1K0K
MN3U-EKKQ-21V6K
6NUD-4E0F-U2TCR
MJ0W-8T9A-QB6WD

Infinite creation points
ERT1-R7Z0-3VBRH
D9H6-97GF-JUZBM
5CWV-YCXC-A2X22

Player 1 pocket fighter
RB2B-79MK-WKEY0
E9VE-Y0ZJ-A2VNZ
TCW7-274G-RNTYN
B4UC-Z5FC-H063V

Player 2 pocket fighter
9PNB-V5J9-V9B4G
KBTT-YAV9-X54GH
K128-HF0H-7UQ4E
QNTH-DNDZ-578RF

Always in bra and panties
BWKR-4XDY-XMPN4
1THC-Q8HB-PGJW4
UP05-R69J-3J6A6
252P-62ZM-K73VD
78MW-2Q11-1Y1XR
1VBZ-UWK9-M3JTT
EMXP-X15K-RTQ0N
RQQ3-TY2T-ZCUBY
H3D8-J8JZ-JHTRU
G533-9RUC-JBCWM





WARIO WARE INC: MEGA PARTY GAME$

Master code
QZGJ-WC9F-7N7AH
51MH-2F74-06M9R

Start with 99 lives
BPNN-XW8D-GX0CF
7N81-6N8U-NWEA9

Never lose lives
C2GF-EE30-QK4TG
FRTR-01P8-7J7VC
GDKT-KBQG-N56MA

Open all genres
PZ1G-WCGX-APT2U
3V0C-7ZHE-03DZ1
EKT7-GGDJ-2D352
99W3-CCER-X2KD2
4DHQ-533V-H8Y89

Freeze timer (Press L)
63Q7-Q7CW-AM3VG
7203-ZA5T-505W4
KHA3-ZAZQ-TTNFV
QYNX-K340-AVKQM

Enable timer (Press R)
W1KZ-41DU-6EN11
MJKT-2ZN5-7WHR1
EPG0-T1UZ-EF2B3
A9F9-7MQ2-7U0AC



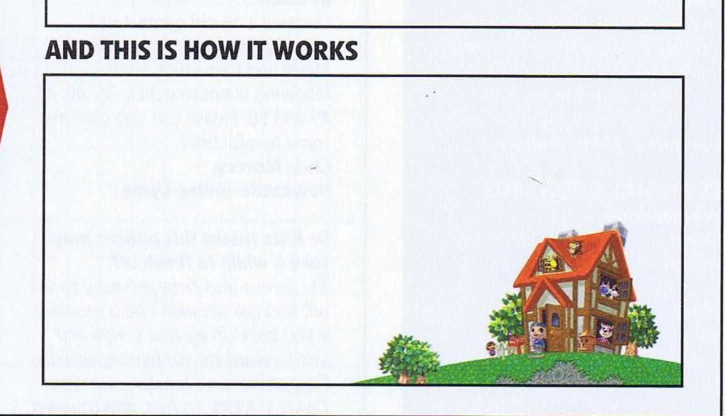
YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirk in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If yours is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a cool prize. Good, huh? Just don't send us cheat codes from the 'net...

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS



Name ....

Address ....

.... Postcode ....

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, to help focus your mind.



Inside issue 143:

Hands on with Nintendo DS

What you need to know about the finished hardware, launch titles, and every other game currently in development. Plus: Reggie on taking names and kicking ass.

On sale now

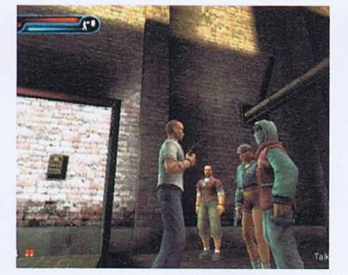
HEY! IT'S THE CONTINUATION OF…

GAME ON!




There's a wealth of new games coming our way over the next couple of months, and we want you to make the most of them. Once you've played them the way the designers intended you to, you can play them in ways the developers never imagined, making up your own oddball minigames and submitting them to Game On. And to encourage you, we're giving a brand-new Gamecube game drawn at random from special Geraint's special drawer to the person who sends in the best Game On each month. Send your ideas to Game On, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

SECOND SIGHT


STREET STRIFE

James Watson,
Orpington

Our first *Second Sight* Game On! This can't be the only one to be found, though – there's so much to do and see in Free Rad's beauty.

On the Street Life level, where you're duffing up men in suits, get the sawn-off shotgun and make your way over to the group of thugs standing by the panda car. **Now see how many gang members you can kill with the aforementioned boomstick without alerting the FBI or dying.** Although Vattic's a bit of a superman by now, with his Psi-Blasts and Psychokinesis and the rest, you're not allowed to use your psychic powers, and you're not allowed to use anyone as a shield either. So, count up those kills and see how you did.



KILLS		
 20+	 18+	 16+

METAL GEAR SOLID







SLOW DEATH

Daniel Thompson,
Reading

Psycho Mantis – what a nutter. **This challenge requires you to defeat him in a very slow, excruciatingly painful manner. You can use an M4 or SOCOM for it, but basically, you're only allowed to shoot Mantis in the arms or legs.** Every body or head hit you make will count against your final ranking. If you've met him before, you'll know Mantis has a really irritating habit of vanishing, so you have to be fast if you're going to get him – something that'll make avoiding misplaced shots even trickier! See him, shoot him in the leg, no hanging around.

Daniel recommends saving your game before the fight so you can try the challenge again if you like. Always a good tactic for bosses, that.

HEAD/BODY HITS		
 0	 1-2	 3+

TONY HAWK'S UG



HANDY MAN

Jonathan Maxwell, Dromore

Skateboarders on the subway? Where's a lorry load of ready mixed, pourable concrete when you need one?

Aaaanyway, in Free Skate mode, go to the Manhattan level. From the start, go straight down the road ahead and take the second left turn. When you reach the subway, enter it. Now manual down the ramp to build us a bit of speed. **In the subway, without touching the walls or the ramps, try to stay moving purely by pulling off tricks.** The longer you keep going, the better you'll do for this one.

TIME			
	2:00+	1:00+	0:30+

ANIMAL CROSSING



OH, BEE-HAVE!

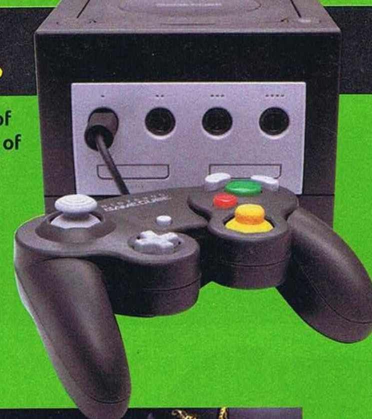
Ryan Wilkinson Oxford

Bees! Black and yellow (or is it yellow and black?) pain merchants that are off their face on nectar 99% of the time. Every day in *Animal Crossing* there are five bee nests in your town (shake trees to make them fall out), and the Thieving Nook will give you 4,500 Bells for each one. **For this challenge, see how many days in a row you can catch at least three nests for.** That's right, at least three nests per day, for as many days as you can. And note: some trees drop cash when you shake 'em...

DAYS			
	4+	3	2



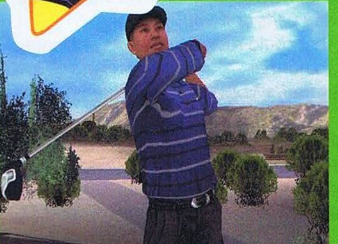
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...



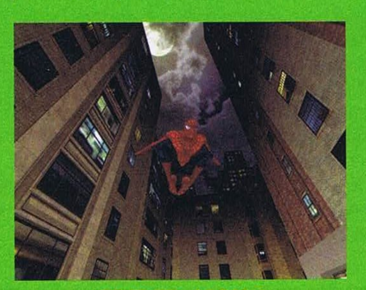
Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to...

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in...


TIGER WOODS 2005


SECOND SIGHT


SPIDER-MAN 2

WWE DAY OF RECKONING

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your *name and address* so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

JOYTECH™

'Blisster'

I have just vowed that I will mail you one of my Nintendo poems every month. That's right, every stinking month. This month's feature: Home in the Crossing.

Oh, give me a home where the animals roam, where the cats and the dogs play together.

Oh, give me a city with no sorrow or pity, where you can have fun regardless of weather.

Tom Nook may be cruel and take every bell, but keep working steady, you'll be freed from his cell.

The journey to the Crossing is about to begin. Where will you be as the rest of us move in?

K.K. will be chanting as the city expands, but neglect it for a week and there'll be naught left but sand.

Oh, give me a chance to enter the trance, of blisster and joy once again.

Oh, to not buy this game, is a terrible shame, so enter the Crossing of friendship and fame.

Once you start playing you'll never want to stop, now I'm off to dig holes outside Tom Nook's evil shop.

Bjoern Silas Dvergastein, Norway

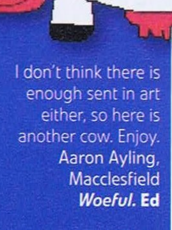
An excellent ode. I don't know what 'blisster' means, but I'm sure it's lovely and fluffy. Ed



Bonus Letters

Since I love Nintendo so much I decided they needed a place of ritual.
Stuart Partlett, Cleveland
Perhaps you could try selling them Stonehenge. Ed

The game I hate most in *Wario Ware* is the dressing Wario game, because I'd rather see him wandering around the game in his boxers.
Tim Henton, Grimsby
You probably shouldn't have admitted that. Ed



I don't think there is enough sent in art either, so here is another cow. Enjoy.
Aaron Ayling, Macclesfield
Woeful. Ed

I have conducted a poll around my school and among friends over the internet and have come up with the following results: Sonic = 32 votes, Mario = 5.
Sean Barton, via email
The question was 'Are you a total spakker? Vote 'Sonic' for yes, 'Mario' for no.' Ed

Could you PLEASE stop being rude about Sonic?
Matthew McDermid, Gloucester
When have I ever been rude? Oh… Ed

'I was small'

I have been playing games ever since I was small, but over the years the magic I used to associate with all my old favourites seems to be missing from modern releases. Back when games were original, by which I mean not sequels, they oozed quality and were an overwhelming joy to play.

Nowadays game producers seem to be relying on rehashes of tried and trusted formulas which don't seem to cut it any more. Mere improvements to graphics and sound cannot be hailed as innovative. If you strip a game down to the bare bones, removing the aesthetic mask, you are basically left with gameplay from the early days. Collecting coins and saving princesses were fun and unique in the '80s, but if games continue to take the same formulaic approach then I really worry for the future.

Game producers need to sit and think about their approach to games design to prevent this from happening. I just pray that DS is as unique as Nintendo claims it to be.

John Mulvey, London

Off the top of my head,* Pikmin, Luigi's Mansion, Wario Ware, Donkey Konga *and* Metroid Prime *show that originality is far from dead on Gamecube. Perhaps DS will inspire the producers of those titles to even greater heights. Ed

'Blows chunks'

As you, and everyone with more than half a brain cell, already know, *GoldenEye* is still the best first-person shooter available on any console. I think it's better than any PC FPS too, but a lot of people disagree with me on that one. Meh, I s'pose I just can't escape stupidity.

Anyway, to my point: I love *GoldenEye* very much. I've played through it (and unlocked 007 mode) many, many times. Over this weekend, I decided to give it another play through just to see how well it's aged compared to today's FPS games, and it still holds up. Well, it more than holds up, it truly destroys today's FPS efforts! It guns *TimeSplitters* down with its DD44, it blows chunks outta *Red Faction* with its grenade launcher and humiliates *Halo* with its Klobb! In fact, the only real problem this timeless game has is that it has to be played with a joypad with a limited lifespan.

Since all my N64 pads have been worn out and are all practically unusable now, I can't play my favourite game ever again! I was wondering if you guys knew where I could find a place that sells new N64 pads or if you knew of an operation that could restore my pad's analogue stick back to normal.

Grindie Sempai, via email

You could always try dismantling the pad and using distilled water to wash the dried sweat and skin flakes (ewww) out of the analogue. Lik-sang.com sometimes has replacement



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone who wrote in, including (but not limited to): James Richards, Caldicot; Rees Kent, Chelmsford; Peter Prochaski, Gloucestershire; Natalie Guest, Rainham; Aaron Robinson, via email; Adam Martin, St Helens; Andy Lythe, Leeds; Matthew Hutchison, Salisbury; Janne Kaitila, Finland; Richard Mortensen, Norway; Alex White, Bristol; Mel Taylor, Cheltenham; Gordon Yeung, Cardiff; Tony Pang, Orpington; Nicky Tweedale, Scotland; Andy Cave, Amersham; Rory Dixon, via email; Daniel Bradnam, via email; Eoin Connolly, Ireland; Kathryn Convery, Saffron Walden; James Bowden, Waterlooville; Steven Crossley, Bury;

parts in stock, and 400-odd brand new N64s have been sold this year. The sticks are out there somewhere… Ed

'Car boot'

The other weekend I went to a car boot sale. I had been wanting an N64 since I played on my mate's, and lo and behold there was one on the table in its original box. I asked how much it was and I finally bought it for £5. Now every time I go to the car boot I look every where for great retro Nintendo consoles.
James Tyrrell, Towcester

Thanks for sharing. I paid £250 for mine. Ed



'Cynical comment'

Why is it that so many gamers feel the need to rant about how bad a forthcoming game is and how much better the old one was? I enjoy browsing message boards occasionally, but for almost every game I'm looking forward to there's always someone to throw in a cynical comment about it. And I'm not just talking one or two people, anyone who has any sort of faith in a game is shot down by the masses on forums these days. *Resi's* new enemies, *Metroid's* multiplayer mode, *Zelda* NOT being cel-shaded any more… You name the game, and there's a hundred people waiting to tear it to shreds. Why is this? Do people fear change that much? Or is it just that there are far more cynics out there than I first imagined? The whole thing just makes me want to abandon forums for good – at least that way I can look forward to a game without people making fun of everything to do with it.
Gary Wells Lisburn, Ireland

I think deliberately winding people up on a message board is an easy way for people who don't have much sense of self-worth to become the centre of attention. Even if that's not true, change can be a scary thing – I haven't changed my socks since Space World 2000, but when I do, you can believe it'll be terrifying. Ed

Bonus Letters

Not having to keep the disc spinning prolongs battery life.
Rob Jones, via email
That's the power of physics. Ed

So Nintendo, start giving Gamecubes away for free!
Kurt Martens, Belgium
Yeah! And stuff the boxes with fivers too. Ed

My father-in-law was not too amused at having to explain the word 'rectum' to his daughter.
Chris Schilling, via email
Erm… Ed

I got overexcited about Nintendo DS.
"Koi", via email
Nurse! Ed

I've got her hooked on Gamecube.
Greg Hill, Kent
Nintendo pusher. Ed

Why can't you have coloured hens?
Susan Kirk, Rochdale
Same reason you can't have the moon on a stick. Ed

I swiftly picked the ice cream wrapper out.
David Bell, Stockport
And sent it here, still covered in chocolate lick. Ed

Its so-called 'tattoo symbols' make it no more stylish than the normal silver SP and no more powerful.
Heather Raymond, Milford Haven
You've shattered my illusions. Ed

Thank you, **NGC**, for opening my eyes to this repetition and lack of originality. Now I don't have to waste my money on Crash Bandicoot games.
Katherine Haywood, Barnsley
Job done. Ed

'Going mad'

I might be going mad here but the cloud backdrop for the *Paper Mario* stage you gave away with **NGC**/98 looks a hell of a lot like Wario. You can see his eyes with pupils, his big nose and even an evil looking smile.
John Ogilvie, Forres

Waah-ha-ha-haaa! Ed



△ **Look closely and you'll spot Wario lurking.**

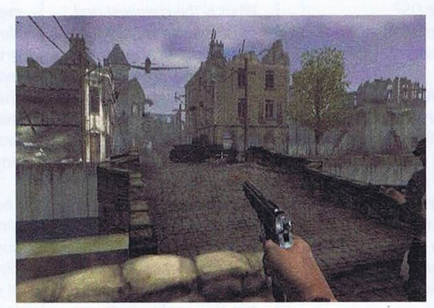
'Awkward for lefties'

I think I've figured out why DS lacks an analogue stick – because of left-handed people. You see, to use the D-pad and stylus is very awkward for lefties, which is why the buttons on the right of the DS are in a D-pad shape. The functions can be switched for left-handed people, allowing the buttons to be used as a D-pad. This implies that if an analogue was to feature on the left, then left-handed people would need an equivalent on the right. Surely Nintendo would not put an analogue on the right side as well. Issue solved, hopefully.
Harjeet Bains, Birmingham

Also, including an analogue would encourage lazy developers to use it all the time, and the touch screen might become just a novelty feature rather than a gameplay-changing one. Sensible, sure, but I so wanted a perfect GoldenEye DS and other N64 updates. Sob… Ed

'Clang up'

On a normal day, reading your (relatively) normal mag, consuming normal things, I noticed something very strange about every FPS I had ever played in my life. The guns don't actually exist. For example, when you see a character from third-person view or in multiplayer, it isn't hard to see the gun sticking



△ **When is a gun not a gun..?**

CORRECTION CORNER

In **NGC**/98's *Animal Crossing* review you claimed *Harvest Moon* was published by Konami. What were you thinking? *Harvest Moon* was developed by Natsume and distributed by Ubi Soft! Not Konami. To add insult to injury you claimed it was rated 90%, when Kittsy clearly gave it a thoroughly deserved 91%. The per cent makes all the difference you know.
Alasdair Henry, Morpeth

You're right. Faces will be slapped. Ed

In **NGC**/97's Most Wanted list, you mention *Second Sight* in rank 3. And then you say, "…oh, hang on. Review code's just arrived! Stop the Press! Go to page 54…" This, I imagined, was the page that the review started. But actually, the review started on page 56. Bad mistake…
James Evans, Walsall

Ahh, we've done worse. I'll let that one go. Ed

Kenny Wheeler, via email; Ibro Alfa, London; Matt O'Brien, Hatton; Alex Stuart, Farnbourgh; Michelle Doughty, Birmingham; Maxim Grunewald, West Bretton; Matt Dyson, via email; David Jones, Liverpool; David Collin, Littlehampton; Niall Geraghty, Coventry; Ross Parry, Middlesbrough; Jack Clarkson, Staines; Tim Osborne, via email; Matthew Duffell, Chorley; Matt Costello, Liverpool; Nick Desmond, Hitchin; Ryan Power, Camberley; Christian Connolly, Sutton Coldfield; Lee Fletcher, Halifax; Jarleth Hurson, N Ireland; Matthew Prior, via email; Nathan Edgeworth, Cardiff; Kev Race, Keighley; Chris Bounds, Bognor Regis; Eleanor Harby, Sheffield; Nick Adams, somewhere; Kallum Shah, somewhere else. Thanks, folks!



Grintendo!

SEND US YOUR NINTENDO JOKES! MAKE THEM GOOD AND YOU WIN A GAME. BUT IF MR WHITE FAILS TO SEE THE FUNNY SIDE, THE YELLOW PIKMIN DIES. HORRIBLY.
THIS MONTH: DAVID BOREHAM FROM MILTON KEYNES







WRITE TO... GRINTENDO, MAILBOX, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW **OR EMAIL** NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

out in front of the player. But in first-person mode, a gun won't ever actually interact with the scenery. You can poke your gun up against a wall without it colliding – you can hold it into an enemy's face with no effect. It turns out that an actual gun is a sort of 2D pane on your screen. All first-person shooters have done this – *TimeSplitters, Metroid, Perfect Dark.* You name it, the gun never seems to have an actual presence in the universe.

Now I was thinking, what if you made the gun an actual object that would clang up against a wall when walked into or would brush past the neck of an enemy if they chose to stick their face right up against yours. Why hasn't this been done in a game yet?
Michael Rumsby, Alton

***Maybe because your character usually holds his gun at arm's length, and would find it hard to turn around without thumping somebody in the head.* Ed**

'Fiesta'

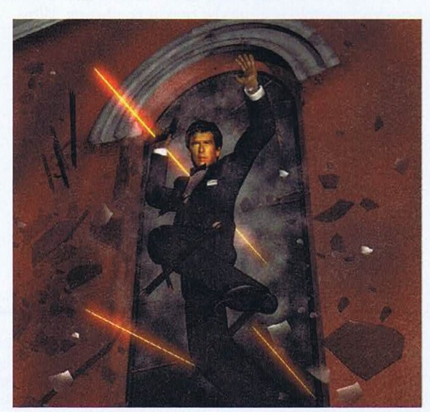
Nintendo should keep the name Game Boy on the DS. Think about it, 170 million units, everyone you ask should be able to tell you what a Game Boy is. Ask them what a DS or a PSP is, and they have no idea. Even when Ford bring out a new car, they keep the name Focus or Fiesta, as they are recognised worldwide. Of course it's Nintendo's decision, so we'll have to see if it's the right one.
Dominic Egan, via email

***The decision not to call it Game Boy DS left us all a bit puzzled too, but it's probably because there's something else in development that will be the true successor to GBA. Exciting times...* Ed**

'Trevelyan'

Right, could you guys settle an argument? After many years of *GoldenEye* multiplayer-ing, I've decided that Alex Trevelyan is slower at running than any of the other characters. It's true! Whenever I've been pursued around, say, the Basement level, they always manage to catch up with me. Could you guys test this theory? Because my brothers refuse to believe me, simply reasoning that I am rubbish. So as a matter of pride, could you guys try and prove me right? Can't you do it while you're on a tea break or something?
Matt Cherng, Reading

***I honestly can't tell the difference. Maybe you should try shooting at your brothers instead of letting them chase you.* Ed**


Δ It's a shooter. So shoot people.

SO TELL ME THIS...

The NGC Think-O-Tron knows all...

1. Will US GC games work on my UK GC?
2. If I buy a DS in the US, will UK games work on it?
3. Which is the best: The Urbz, Harvest Moon or Animal Crossing?
Rosie Chandler, Roehampton

1. Only if you buy a Freeloader disc.
2. Yes.
3. Animal Crossing, especially if you share it with your family or friends.

1. I have Friends of Mineral Town as a ROM on my PC. Is there any way I can get the seaside house now by connecting to a Gamecube?
2. Is Harvest Moon AWL and FoMT For Girls making a UK debut?
3. How about a Harvest Moon for DS?
Sean McGuire, Amersham

1. Duh! No, because ROMs are illegal pirate copies. Buy a real copy of the GBA game right now, before I send Ubi Soft's enforcers round to rip your arms off.
2. There are currently no plans for either.
3. You can bank on it.

Will Resident Evil Outbreak *be coming out on Gamecube, and if so, will it be online-compatible?*
Ed Hebbourn, via email

No, but we're getting the superior (offline) Resident Evil 4. Yay!

What is the cheapest and most reliable way of connecting my Gamecube to a PC and/or PC monitor? Does the monitor or PC itself need any particular ports for this?
Ben Randall, Surrey

You can buy cheap composite-to-VGA convertors that will let you run a console or DVD signal through a monitor, but the quality isn't brilliant. The easiest way to hook up to a PC is to use a graphics card with TV tuner or video capture functions, but again the quality is probably worse than most TVs. If you want to spend a bit more and are handy with a soldering iron, you can run an RGB signal through certain PC graphics cards using instructions available on the web, but the question has to be: why would you need to do it anyway? Blork!

I have a game folder from Nintendo that says: 'Pure gaming since 1889'. Were there even televisions at that time?
Jonathan Trier Brikner, Denmark

They made playing cards before branching out into toys, amusement arcades and, when there were enough tellies in the world, videogames.

NEXT MONTH
Three kings

NINTENDO DS

Every Dual Screen launch game played and rated – plus our verdict on the finished system. Grab yourself a piece of history!

PLUS! FREE DVD RAMMED WITH THE BIGGEST CHRISTMAS GAMES!

REVIEWED!

GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT • PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN • WARIO WARE 2 • IT'S MR PANTS
THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY • THE INCREDIBLES • GRAND THEFT AUTO ADVANCE • MUCH MORE…

METROID

The first and only review of *Echoes* you need. Unmissable!

MARIO

First again! Hard-hitting *Mario Tennis* review. Ace!



BONUS!

- Final Fantasy returns to Nintendo (again)
- All-new Mario Party on GC & GBA!
- Star Fox – what on earth's going on?
- Fresh new magazine features!

Magazine contents subject to change – but only for the better!

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PROPHESYING THE NEWS OF TOMORROW WITH REAL-LIFE FUTUROLOGY

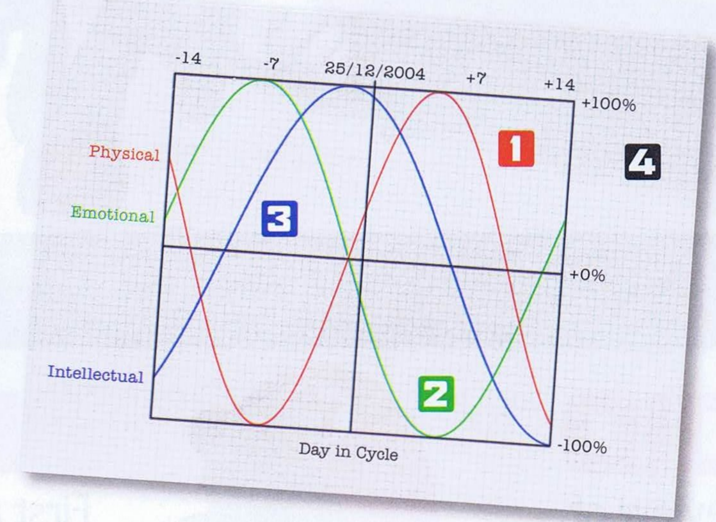
MADAME GREENER *Predicts...*

Looking into the future through crossed eyes...

THIS MONTH: CHRISTMAS CHARTS

Peace on Earth and goodwill to all men can't be guaranteed for Christmas. But what you can count on is a tsunami of new Gamecube games, designed to mop up *your* festive cash. Madame Greener becomes a slave to the biorhythm to predict the winners and losers in December's chart wars.

1 Biorhythm number one is the Physical – that's related to the 'bioelectric' processes that determine strength and co-ordination. This, if you can make your imagination leap the approximate width of the Grand Canyon, means action games. As the Physical curve is tumbling into the negative part of the diagram as December rolls on, this means Gamecube is 'out of touch' with its action side, spelling disappointment for big-banging blasters, and spelling it in jumbo red marker pen at that. Potential festive disappointment for *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*, you say? That's pretty big talk there, fella.



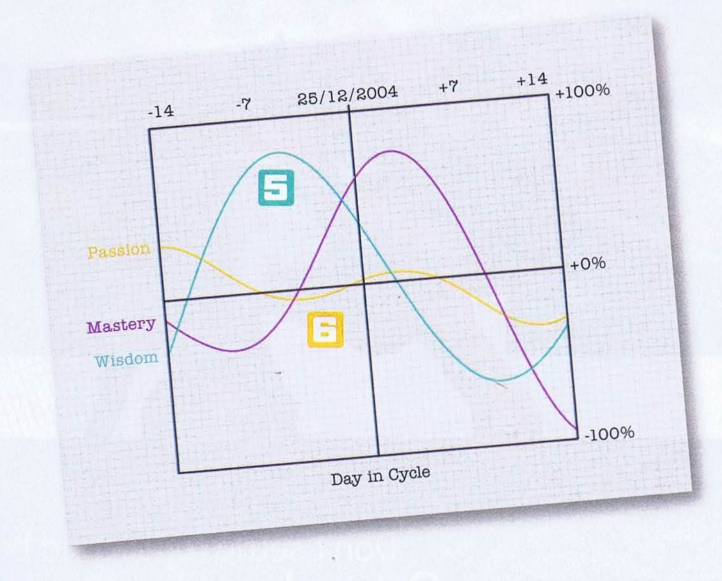
2 The Emotional cycle, this. It represents Gamecube's 'creativity', it repeats every 28 days or so, and a week before Christmas Day it's climbing into positive territory. Which could mean that a creative, original game – *Donkey Konga*, perhaps – will see some chart success in December. Why Madame Greener can't just fiddle things so we get 'EA To Stamp On Everyone Else's Face' as a prediction, we really don't know.

3 The Intellectual cycle is a 33-day repeater – co-incidentally, the same as Madame Greener's crippling earlobe pain – and is tied to logic and analytical thinking powers. This is the one that's almost bursting off the top of the graph come Jesus' big birthday bash, which is inexplicably suggesting that a puzzle or strategy game will be top of the Christmas tree. The, er, Christmas chart… tree. *Pikmin 2*? *Animal Crossing*? *Goblin Commander*? Maybe we used the wrong-coloured pencils or something.

4 At just two years old, Gamecube is enjoying a generally positive biorhythmic trip. Trouble is, according to the theory books, the next big downer isn't scheduled to occur until the system reaches 58 years old – something that even The Reg would consider slightly optimistic.

5 Seeing as we're already making proper biorhythmicists stamp their feet and cry, we're going the whole hog by extending our chart beyond the traditional three biorhythms. Ignoring the 'Mastery' rhythm for reasons of space (and not, of course, empty-minded confusion on our part), we see the 'Wisdom' cycle accelerating upwards until it hits its peak in Christmas week. Something cerebral will be climbing the chart in the run-up to the 25th, then – *Tales of Symphonia*, maybe? Certainly not *The Incredibles*, anyway.

6 This is the Passion line, another of those controversial 'secondary' biorhythms. No prizes for guessing what it represents, and it's a bumpy ride downstairs right through the twelfth month. To us, this reads as: Gamecube failing to match Xbox and PS2 in the big Chrimbo sales battle. Or it could just mean it'll be given a wide berth under the mistletoe.



AND THE PREDICTIONS...

Metroid Prime 2 to underperform and make Nintendo execs weep into their Christmas pud.

Donkey Konga or a similarly quirky title to be a hit with mad Xmas shoppers.

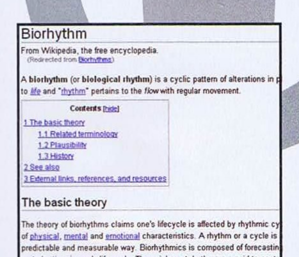
A strategy game - *Animal Crossing*, *Pikmin 2* - will be Gamecube's Christmas No. 1. Sure.

Tales of Symphonia or another less actiony game to climb the charts as The Big Day approaches.

Gamecube to come third in the battle for console and game sales this Christmas. Humbug. And, indeed, bah.

Madame Greener will have her predictions thrown back in her face in a future issue.

THE METHOD BIORHYTHMS


Biorhythm

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.
(Redirected from Biorhythms)

A **biorhythm** (or **biological rhythm**) is a cyclic pattern of alterations in p
to life and "rhythm" pertains to the flow with regular movement.

Contents [hide]
1 The basic theory
1.1 Related terminology
1.2 Plausibility
1.3 History
2 See also
3 External links, references, and resources

The basic theory

The theory of biorhythms claims one's lifecycle is affected by rhythmic cy
of physical, mental and emotional characteristics. A rhythm or a cycle is
predictable and measurable way. Biorhythmics is composed of forecastin
parts by time in one's life cycle. These inherent rhythms are said to contr

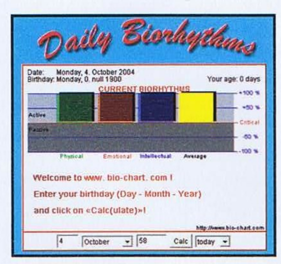
1. Biorhythms map regular cycles of emotional, physical and mental 'stuff'. Madame Greener says it works for consoles, too. While winking oddly.



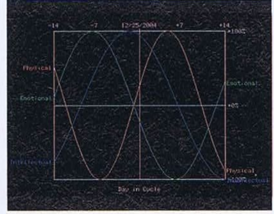
2. It's all based on your birthday – amazing! In the UK, Gamecube was 'born' to proud mummy Nintendo on the 3rd May 2002.



3. The sinusoidal waveforms rhythmate in a non-fluctuating pattern (obviously) so we can pick any period to study. December it is, then.



4. With all the necessary numbers in hand, we stick them all into a free biorhythm generator we found on 'Internet'.



5. The resulting chart looks not unlike the psychedelic mountains we climb endlessly, endlessly, in our nightmares.

TOP 10: ISSUE 200

What we'll be reporting from the NGC Spacestation in 2012.



1 CLONES

Hiroshi Yamauchi completes cybernetically-enhanced Shigeru Miyamoto clone army; dies with what coroner confirms as "something that against medical reasoning and my better judgement I am inclined to agree at least resembles a smile" on his face.



2 YEAH, RIGHT

Anonymous sources claim that Nintendo is "looking into" online gaming.



3 KING OF NEW YORK

Reggie Fils-Aime climbs atop Empire State Building with Nintendo of America PR Manager Beth Llewellyn clasped in his fist, roaring at a volume that shatters 20 million windows city-wide while snaring army helicopters in his hair.



4 WAPEACH

Mario Party 12 features some minigames, one stale new game mode, an insultingly inept storyline about stealing dreams or eating stars or something, and brand new evil-doing character 'Wapeach'.



5 MAP SCREEN

Nintendo DS enters eighth year with 15 innovative new titles, plus 327 that just shove a map on the other screen.



6 MAZZA RETIRES

After disappointing results with four-screened handhelds and pyramid-shaped consoles, Nintendo replaces "tired" mascot Mario with talking, rapping moose called 'Dwight T. Dudemeister III'.



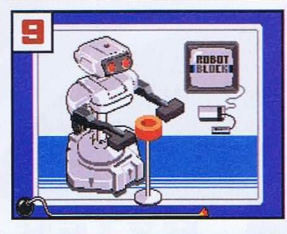
7 BOOTH BABES

2012's E3 expo features revolutionary new thought-control play devices; first 'real-world' quality visuals across landscapes the size of real planets; many girls displaying their large breasts in tight tops.



8 POKÉMON... AND ON

Super-intelligent humanoid robots invented for sole purpose of creating new Pokémon to add to the 1,045,250 little gits already in existence.



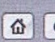
9 HARDWARE

New Nintendo accessories include wireless controller that works at distances of up to 1.5km, a 50-foot tall ROB the Robot II that fires real lasers out its glowing red eyeballs, something with 'Pak' in the name and a cat.



10 SIM MATRIX

It turns out we're all plugged into a big computer game devised by EA, who in the real world earned enough money by 2006 to take over the planet and enslave humanity.


http://www.internetcorrespondent.co.uk

YOUR INTERNET CORRESPONDENT

The best of the 'net several weeks after it happens.

▪ Nintendo execs might think their cool-o-meter is at 'super-street' thanks to Tribal SP, but an online article from tattoo mag Bemezine might make them th-ink (ha!) again. It highlights proper geek tattoos – a guy with a retro Link under his ear, a student with Princess Zelda on her back and some poor soul who asked his tattoo artist for a Link with a "serious look on his face" and ended up with a cross between Christopher Walken and Jackass's Wee Man on his arm. 50 Cent would be proud.
> bmezine.com/news/pubring/20040720.html

▪ Your Internet Correspondent has seen more than his fair share of Nintendo consoles butchered in the name of customisation – but never a GBA that's had a portable screen bolted on, a mains power supply soldered in and a Neo Geo joystick and Sega controller rudely inserted into each flank. "This page is not affiliated with Nintendo," a disclaimer down the bottom reads. Yes, thanks for clearing that up.
> pages.prodigy.net/tan.ax/GBAConsole/gbaconsole.htm
>

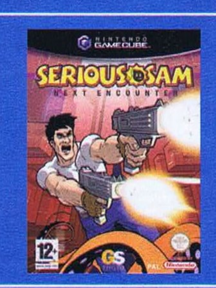
▪ If you're not sure what Unix is, it's best not to ask – understanding it would probably turn your mind into polystyrene. And if you want to know how, or why, someone with a stash of surplus brain has got Unix running on a GBA, we're going to have to shrug our shoulders and grin inanely until you go away. Getting BSD 2.9 up and running? Sorry, non comprendes. Suggestions on how to port 6th Edition Unix to GBA? We're backing away for a reason now.
> kernelthread.com/publications/gbaunix/
>

▪ If you're one of those shady types who enjoys watching amateur Flash-based Mario movies or playing homegrown Zeldas, we've got bad news. Ninty's T2000 Cyberlawyers have asked one site full of home-made 'fan games' to "please remove such content and software from all internet sites". And Nintendo only says 'please' once; the next time, it's a grenade through the window and five men dressed in black holding a spork to your cat's throat. Enjoy online Duck Hunt while you can.
> www.johnnyslack.com/duckhunt/duckhunt.php
>

//got a link?//
Got a Nintendo-related link for us? Email it to ngcyic@hotmail.com

THE MAKING OF...

SERIOUS SAM



ngc00.boxes.s_sam.jpg



△ When Mother Nature *really* gets it wrong.



△ Compulsory Gamecube game element number [illegible] evil monkey (they're the ones not in balls). Nothing says 'purple box' like a chimp with a chains[illegible] or gorilla going postal with a minigun.



Cash-happy developers can normally make you feel pretty inferior with descriptions of their offices – glass towers in tranquil forests with views of wild deer sipping from glistening alpine streams, that sort of thing. Climax are no exception. Their big, modern home stares straight out at the Brighton seafront.

But at least there's one little extra to reassure you that not all coders live in 100% MTV Cribs-style luxury. "All is well and good around here until summer," says Sam Barlow, appropriately-named Lead Designer on the all-ass-kickin' *Serious Sam: Next Encounter*. "That's when the surroundings fill up with holiday makers and Punch & Judy stalls. Try working 12-hour days and spending half of those with a whiney 'That's the way to do it!' in your ears."

Still, when you've got a game like *Serious Sam* in the office, it's easy to take out your frustration. Lifting pages straight from the book of the PC original, and reaching right back to both donkey's-old shooters like *Robotron* and original 3D blasters like *Doom* for its inspiration, *Next Encounter* deliberately sneers at the real-world trappings of *GoldenEye* and *Half-Life*. Like *Ikaruga*, it's unlikely to make the shopping list of your 'casual' Gamecuber – but for gamers who know their stuff, its conveyor belt of alien kill-spree is a real joy to ride. Even for the team that slaved away on it.

"The *Next Encounter* team was around 20-strong, and the atmosphere was pretty good even when we were repeatedly hammering the artists and coders to keep the frame rate up towards the end," recalls Barlow. "That's the advantage of making a game like *Sam* – if we hadn't have had the option to take a five-minute break and shoot a few hundred mutants in the head, it would have been a different story."

Work on *Next Encounter* (originally and brilliantly subtitled "Word to the Mothership") began with the team getting to grips with the then brand-new Gamecube, and sparking up the game engine that would eventually power the screaming roomfuls of headless bombers, ninja monkeys and two-legged green teeth-balls. Climax wouldn't tell us when exactly they

> **"DELIBERATELY SNEERS AT THE REAL-WORLD TRAPPINGS OF GOLDENEYE AND HALF-LIFE"**

FILED BY: MARK GREEN

BYTES



We like to find out what kind of rubbish developers cram into their intestines when they're in the midst of round-the-clock deadline hell. Sam Barlow claims that "coders don't eat as far as I'm aware – they survive on coffee and the firm belief that they're 'The One'". Although he later admitted that "The 100th slice of pizza was pretty rough."

Publisher: Take 2	Release date: 30th Apr 04
Developer: Climax	Reviewed: **NGC**/94, 83%



MONSTER MASH

Sam made the acquaintance of some Next Encounter denizens in his previous adventures. But there was also a host of new faces for him to extend the warm hand of friendship to. Sorry, warm gun of friendship.





△ When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Kill! This is where we do our famed impression of the rebellious, hairy tribes of Germany and kick their mediterranean butts.

got Gamecube dev kits, but it was well before most people had even touched the purple games box.

"We knew the Gamecube could do lots of enemies on screen – there were screenshots of *Pikmin* and 100 Marios doing the rounds," recalls Barlow. "But we had to make sure we could do lots of enemies *plus* explosions and gore. We had some simple prototype maps which we could run around in – then, when the retail Gamecubes arrived, we did more intense research into the hardware (<cough> *Super Monkey Ball* party games <cough>)."

The original *Serious Sam*, which started life as an amateur tech demo from a Croatian coding group before getting enough attention to be scooped up for commercial release in 2001, was an obvious influence, along with its sequel. But retro fans Climax (many of whom have arcade machines at home) fed elements of their favourite old-skool shooters into *Next Encounter*, too (see box on page 111). As for other Gamecube shoot-'em-ups, they were more of a worry to the team than an inspiration. "Playing *Metroid Prime* for the first time was pretty scary," admits Barlow. "Thank God it was a first-person *adventure* and not a first-person shooter!"

"HEADLESS BOMBERS, NINJA MONKEYS AND TWO-LEGGED GREEN TEETH-BALLS"

Serious Sam is one of the few modern videogames that actually feels like a *game*. Clear one castle chamber of angry giganto-bulls and another set spontaneously appear; rooms are filled with clumps of glittering power-ups that you just *have* to pick up; every round fired, monster killed and door opened is accompanied by a suitably meaty sound or sarky *Duke Nukem*-style aside from Sam ("A jumping puzzle! I love jumping puzzles!"). It's a thought-cancelling, sense-battering journey that seems relentlessly fast – but the trick, according to Barlow, is to vary the intensity of the experience to ensure your brain doesn't go looking for something else to do.

"It's not *all* hundreds of enemies," he says. "You need to work up to that, otherwise the relentlessness can get boring. A screen full of baddies stops being exciting if that's *all* there is. And you'll also see us avoiding unnecessary irritation in lots of the streamlining we implemented; the

SCREAM



If you take anything away from Serious Sam, it'll be the nerve-jangling scream of the headless bombers. "We had to fly in a special Croatian team for that," jokes Barlow. "They arrived and took the sound guy into a private room – we haven't seen him since, but what a sound effect! His parents still call from time to time, asking where he is. We told them he's moved to France."



△ A 'red mist' moment for Sam as the Super Combo hits. He's going to blow!



△ *Serious Sam*, serious rocket launcher. You need the right weapons for frantic firing mayhem.


△ Sometimes you just can't reason with club bouncers. Unsurprisingly, this one hated our face.









△ Racking up combos is a lot easier with the chaingun than it is with some of the other weapons on offer.

convenient gamey lockdown markers and arrows, the ability to quickly choose a weapon with the weapon wheel (a godsend, that one), choosing checkpoints over save-points, and so on."

I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT MANY BULLETS CAUSING THAT MUCH GORE ANYWHERE ELSE

In fact, the game's combo system – where massive high-scores and a turbocharged Sam ("Yee-haww!") can be activated with consecutive hits – came fairly late considering it lends the game an integral rhythm that Barlow describes as "key to a shoot-'em-up".

"It completely changed the game," he remembers. "People stopped playing the game like *GoldenEye* and started playing it like *Serious Sam* – running and gunning, trying to kill as much as possible as quickly as possible, posting up best times and scores on the office message boards. It was really cool to see that working pretty much as planned the second it went in."

Not every planned feature made it in, though, and Climax's cutting room floor was soon a rustling carpet of abandoned ideas. There were jet packs ("scrapped early for reasons that are probably pretty obvious"), a gun that reprogrammed itself after absorbing enemy projectiles ("*too* complicated"), evil wasps ("sucky enemy; we nixed them"), and – one of the more painful chops – multiplayer races designed expressly for the new Jeep, Sub and Combine Harvester vehicles. These were chucked out for time reasons, despite some of the courses (a Roman-era Circus Maximus included) having already been built.

As the game progressed, *Next Encounter* became home to some of Gamecube's finest weapons and most hateful enemies. Barlow cites those evil sword-toting monkeys as one of his favourite beasts, and names the ridiculously over-the-top Seeking Minigun as his weapon of choice. "Shooting off a cloud of projectiles and watching them chase after enemies, slicing up a whole battlefield, is a beautiful thing," he says, dreamily. "I've never really seen that many bullets, chasing after that many enemies and causing that much gore anywhere else."

The size and scale of *Next Encounter's* environments, set as far afield as BC-era Rome, ancient China and mythical Atlantis, make

SAM I AM



Where did the idea for 'Mini Sam', the hero's arch-nemesis and pint-sized doppelganger, spring from? Too much Austin Powers? Barlow claims, not entirely seriously, that "our producer, Matt, is a dead ringer for 'Mini Sam'. He wanted to be in the game, so we let him. We had to tone it down a little though – the real Matt is much uglier."

SERIOUS INSPIRATION

Sam Barlow explains how to stir yourself up a *Serious Sam*.







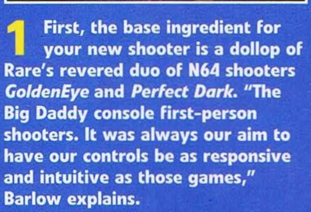












1 First, the base ingredient for your new shooter is a dollop of Rare's revered duo of N64 shooters *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*. "The Big Daddy console first-person shooters. It was always our aim to have our controls be as responsive and intuitive as those games," Barlow explains.

2 Now add a good shot of rock-hard 1990 arcade blaster *Smash TV*. "The pacing of the waves, the way they mixed up a few enemy types into interesting challenges, and 360° action on a 2D plane. The arenas and AI in *Serious Sam* are similar – as is the emphasis on co-operative play."

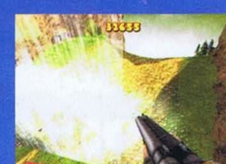
3 Stir in a dash of super-popular 1986 shooter *Ikari Warriors*. "What we took from this was the way the vehicles worked. They were short-lived power-ups, really, a few minutes of invulnerability and awesome power. And in co-op mode you'd race – and shoot – your mates to get to them first."

4 Some games were definitely *not* influences on *Serious Sam: Next Encounter*. "Like the Mary-Kate and Ashley games and those Japanese horse racing ones," says Barlow. "Everything else was fair game." Shame. We'd have loved facing – and marmalising – a tribe of Olsens.











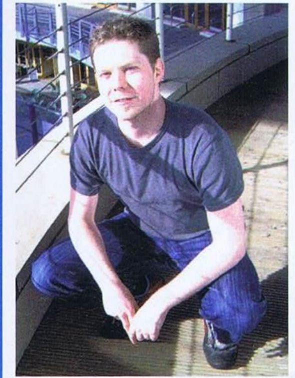
its prequels' levels look like doll's houses – as the impressive Guardian of the Gates level testifies. "Seeing these giant, mile-high statues and then walking up to them and eventually making it up onto them and climbing into their heads…" says Barlow. "It's probably the biggest level in the game, and comes with a nice sense of (ridiculous) scale. It's like The Lord of the Rings or something."

Serious Sam: Next Encounter was prodded and tested from all sides to ensure it held together. Aside from the relentless badgering of the artists over the frame rate described earlier, the determined testers (who "love to break stuff", according to Barlow) used the new vehicles to test the level designers' patience by "grabbing big air and trying to jump over our barriers or out of the levels".

But Climax also invited some gamers "off the street" to blow bits of juicy alien chunks around as the game approached completion. The results were not unlike a game in itself. "Some of them were a bit too interested in games and it was *really* difficult to get them to leave," says Barlow. "We were running round the studio trying to find them before they got to see too many secrets, playing cat and mouse and having to co-ordinate to head them off!"

But as a sign of the magic the developers on *Next Encounter* were pulling off, it also proved tricky to get the actual coders home. "Playing the game in co-operative mode during the final stages of testing was a highlight. We had such a blast, even after all the long nights, that we knew the game was going to be fun for others to play. Co-op is one of the best things about the Sam franchise, and playing it, shooting each other in the back, shouting and swearing at each other, having a general laugh, was proof that we'd hit that nail on the head." That's the way to do it, indeed.

ENDGAME



Barlow draws a blank on Climax's post-completion celebrations. "A quick poll of the team members finds that none of us can actually remember what happened," he says. "This is probably a good sign. It'll all come back to me some day, I'm sure – like in the film Memento. Then they'll find the bodies…"





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Casper: Spirit Dimensions
Catwoman
Clone Wars, Star Wars
Conflict: Desert Storm 1 & 2
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Crush Hour, WWE

D = 04
Darkened Skye
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
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F = 06
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Fire Blade
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H = 08
H.Potter & Chamber of Sec.
H.Potter & Pris. of Azkaban
H.Potter: Quidditch W. Cup
Harvest Moon 2: Wond. Life
Haunted Mansion
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hobbit
Hulk

J = 10
James Bond 007: Nightfire
James Bond: Agent Under F.
James Bond: E. or Nothing
Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast
Jeremy McGrath's S'cross W.
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death

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Kirby's Air Ride

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Leg. of Zelda: Wind Waker
Leg.of Zelda: Majora's Mask
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Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
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Luigi's Mansion

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Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Mega Man Network Tran.
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Need for Speed: H.Pursuit 2
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Ribbit King
Rising Sun, Medal of Honor
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Rogue Leader
Rogue Ops

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Second Sight
Serious Sam Next Encounter
Shrek 2
Simpsons: Hit & Run
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Sims: Bustin' Out
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Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.
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T = 20
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Tarzan Freeride
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Turok, Evolution
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger

V = 22
Viewtiful Joe

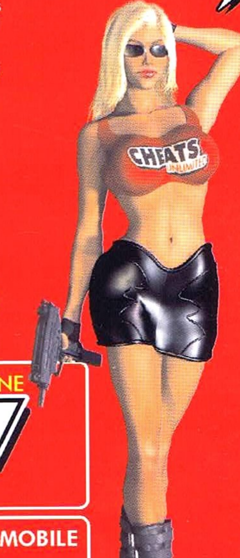
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Wario Ware Inc.: M.P.G.$
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WWE Wrestlemania XIX

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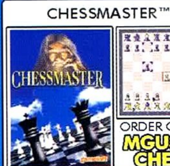

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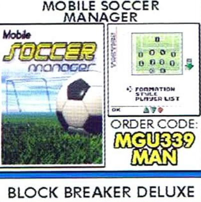
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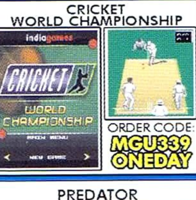

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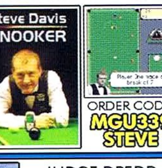

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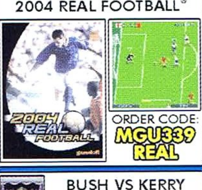
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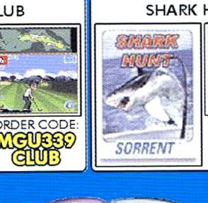
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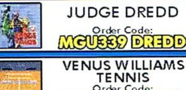
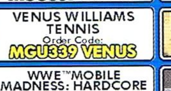
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